

Libraries

(A Continuation of *Public Libraries*)

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A Parting Word

On November 16 comes word from LIBRARIES' office, Chicago, that friends of the magazine and of its editor have taken possession of the issue for December, 1931, with the expectation of preparing it, publishing in it what seems to them fitting, and requesting that, except for furnishing a parting word, the real editor be not concerned about the matter in any way. The message carries the assurance that those assuming charge of it will "give due respect to what is fitting and in no wise jeopardize the standing that has been attained by the periodical in previous issues!"

This message is received with various sensations, but it is a blessed relief to feel that the task of closing the final chapter of this child of my brain does not lie in my hands.

Thousands of witnesses, I am sure, will add their testimony that it is not an easy thing to say goodbye to long associations and friends where both association and friendship have been very close and absorbing. But, on the other hand, it doesn't seem quite right to drop the editorial pencil and go out without a word of appreciation of the long years which have knit together common interests and absorbing endeavors as well as personal friendships that have formed a

constant network of support—friendships which will still endure in memory.

I venture to offer a few parting reflections.

It has been a glorious third of a century. Looking back I can see where different attitudes and different performances might have brought more satisfactory conditions and results. What was done was done from an honest conviction of a clear conscience at the time, and, in spite of advantage or conditions that might have ensued from a different attitude, word or act, it was impossible for me to have done otherwise. If there be those who were helped in the years, I am grateful. If there were those who felt deprived of their rights thereby, I regret it, but it was impossible to have honestly done otherwise, and, without any mental reservation whatever, I can still say it was a glorious period.

My years that preceded the editorship were in every way a preparation for the years beginning in 1896 and ending—who knows when? Personal endeavor, personal associations, success and defeat, all contributed, if not to my accretion of parts of the alphabet, to the warp and woof of the fabric of my life. The memories of all these things I count my most precious possessions.

And what shall I say in grateful recog-

nition of the hundreds of letters and messages that have come to me in this past year? Words fail me in which to tell of the comfort, the solace, even joy, that I have derived from the receipt of expressions of sympathy, and interest, and good wishes, and friendship, and appreciation of long forgotten incidents and heartening expressions of hope for the passing of the cloud that threatened me. (It seems now as if I might again participate in some part of library activity.) I should like to thank especially those who in their letters have attributed to me "the first aid to a beginner" that carried them forward to their present position and power. It is a pleasant thing to feel that one was at hand when it was possible to help, and especially gratifying to have recognition of such help from one who has "achieved."

As for myself, I shall be eternally grateful here (and I am sure hereafter)

for the friendly words, for the sincere handclasps, for the honest beams of friendly eyes, for the affectionate regard with which my work has been received by countless numbers. These are the things I remember, and where there occurred a gap in expectations or fulfillment, years and disposition have dropped upon it a curtain of oblivion. Another would doubtless have done differently and achieved greater results. But the task was given into my hands and I did what I have done, my way, with malice toward none and with charity for all. I have laid my stone in the building of library service in the first third of the twentieth century, and where and when others have found it a helpful stepping-stone, I shall still abide in the work they are able to accomplish because of that stone, and so, as editor of *PUBLIC LIBRARIES* and *LIBRARIES*, "Ave! Salve!"

MARY EILEEN AHERN

A Note from the Publishers

We wish to express publicly to Miss Ahern our feeling of great regret that the long and pleasant business association which we have had with her now comes to an end. It has been a privilege to be associated with this independent, professional journal. Because of our close contact with Miss Ahern and her work for these many years, we know, possibly as few others do, what she has given of herself in long hours and sustained effort, not only to the editorial work but also to her extensive correspondence with those who were seeking help and advice on difficult professional problems.

The decision for an orderly closing out of the affairs of the magazine has not been a precipitous one, and it is our

opinion that *Libraries* without its present editor is impossible.

We sincerely hope that Miss Ahern will now have time available to do for her own personal pleasure some of the things which her devotion to the work in hand has heretofore prevented her from doing. We feel certain, however, that her future years will be devoted to the true interests of the library profession no less than the past years have been.

Her influence will remain with us, for our good.

Harry R. Datz
H. R. Sampson

Library Bureau Division
Remington Rand Inc.

Valedictory

C. B. Roden, librarian, Chicago public library

The present number of *Libraries* is the final one and its contents are the product of a group of friends of the magazine and of its editor, who have taken possession of the sanctum for the twofold purpose of bidding farewell to the former and of paying their respects to the latter. They recognize these as two separate and distinct proceedings. They bid farewell to *Libraries* which, having played its important part in promoting as well as recording the progress of librarianship in America for these thirty-six years, is now about to close its honorable career. But they are not bidding farewell to its editor since they have neither wish nor reason to believe that her decision to accept that *otium cum dignitate* which is the dream of many and the fate of few will render her less accessible to her friends or less inclined to their friendships.

But the withdrawal of the personality that guided its policies and pervaded its pages from first to last made it inevitable that *Libraries* should announce its termination. Its work was done when its editor ceased to do it and when the one retired the other necessarily followed. Its place in the library field will not and cannot be filled. That is one of the concomitants of that interesting phase of the editorial profession known as personal journalism, of which this magazine was always an interesting and successful example.

But personal journalism also has its satisfactions, and they are many and deep. Among them are the strong ties of personal friendship and confidence that are established between editor and reader, and the wide opportunities thus afforded for the exercise of a wise and far-reaching leadership in the field of their mutual interests. Of such satisfactions this journal and its editor have enjoyed their full measure, and such

leadership they have, together and separately, exercised to good and lasting effect over a wide and responsive circle. In the modest prospectus that opened its first number, *Public Libraries*—the name that should have remained at the masthead to the end—declares its purpose “to deal with all phases of library work in a concise, simple way, such as will give the best aid to those who need it.” Those who needed the aid thus offered were the small public libraries at that time springing up in many parts of the country as a result of the library extension movement then just getting into its stride. What they needed first, in those far-off days when library commissions were few and library training facilities remote, was competent instruction in the very elements of a craft, itself not old, to which many of its new recruits were strangers. But what they needed most was the skilful guidance and organization of their new enthusiasms and the stimulation of self-confidence and self-esteem; a militant champion of their cause who, by precept and example, could enforce its prerogatives and its dignities.

In both kinds they were amply served by the new magazine. *Public Libraries*, as its good old name implied, was established as the organ of the public libraries of this country. As they grew in strength and number, and as the library world became more populous and its problems more complex, the magazine grew with them and continued to serve them, expanding the scope of its interests to meet new developments, but holding fast throughout to the “simple and concise way” adopted in its beginning by the same editor who now decrees its end—an end not of frustration and failure but of culmination and climax; one that closes a chapter in American library history to which this magazine and its

editor have made many valuable and enduring contributions.

And so, in bidding farewell to *Libraries*, we do not choose to employ the accents of mourning nor to indulge in vain regrets, but rather to regard the present occasion as one which marks the completion of a task well done and well worth doing, that could not have been done so well by any other hand, and that will not have to be done again.

The following pages bear their tribute of regard and affection to the Editor who now retires. To her tireless and un-

selfish devotion to the ideals of service as expressed in her written and spoken words, and even more in the manifestations of her vibrant personality, her colleagues from far and near acknowledge an abiding debt of gratitude. In the hearts and minds of her large and loyal constituency she will remain the leader in whose train it was good to follow. To her even larger circle of personal friends she will continue the friend who will not be forgotten and who will not forget. Their cordial good wishes follow her in her retirement.

Miss Ahern and the Associations

Carl H. Milam, *secretary, American Library Association*

The first issue of *Public Libraries*, May, 1896, expressed the editor's desire to "form a close, sympathetic connection" with the American Library Association, state library associations and library clubs, and to give brief accounts of all matters relating to them. In that issue the main article was the Library primer, chapters one to six, compiled under the supervision of an A. L. A. committee. In addition there were reports of eight meetings of library organizations, a statement about membership in the A. L. A. (there were 500 members then) and announcements concerning the Cleveland A. L. A. Conference.

The sympathetic connection begun then has been so well maintained that to Miss Ahern's periodical must be given a very generous share of the credit for the increased size and vigor of American library organizations.

That she has been contributing largely on her own account, as well as through

Libraries, is indicated by the official positions Miss Ahern has held in library associations. She is a life member of the A. L. A. and a fellow of the American Library Institute. In the A. L. A. she has been recorder, member of the Executive Board and Council, and chairman or member of eleven committees. She was a representative of the A. L. A. in France in 1919. The Indiana Library Association was organized by Miss Ahern; she has served as president of the Illinois Library Association; and she has held important positions in the Chicago Library Club. All of these are but samples of her widespread participation and vigorous activity in organized library groups.

Although *Libraries* is being discontinued, it is to be hoped that Miss Ahern will still find channels through which she can communicate to the library world her challenging, fearless, friendly, and always thoughtful criticisms of A. L. A. and state association policies.

Personalia

J. Christian Bay, librarian, The John Crerar library

'Tis the child in man which makes history.

I would give a good deal to know who first uttered this word of wisdom, because he deserves a monument. A book might be written about this little sentence. I should write it if I had genius, or even talent.

To illustrate the way in which this corollary of human life applies to Miss Ahern, let me refer to the career of James Whitcomb Riley, another Hoosier. He grew great and famous and even rich, but he never ceased to be the boy who walked from his doorstep along the sidewalk into town, bought what his mother wanted at the store and returned home—all the way on his hands! Not only that. His mind and faith and hope remained young. His life was that of a child, clear-eyed, gifted, confident in his own good will, certain that when he called to the world in the name of truth and beauty and love, the world would respond.

Miss Mary Eileen Ahern has the same fundamental personality. She has a child's immediate grasp of essentials, the same unbounded faith in truth and beauty, the same instinctive grasp of right and wrong. I can imagine her home, out of which she went into the ups and downs of this curious world carrying strong convictions, unbribeable habits—and the additional blessing of a euphonious name. Do not smile, dear reader, but imagine the background and difficulties of such a combination as Sophonisba Drusilla. A euphonious name is a great asset in life, and wholesome.

The key to an understanding of Miss Ahern's work and influence is that her youth stayed with her. In another hundred or more years she may become feeble, but never old, never aged.

Physiologists talk about response. In human relations, no response is so sure

as that of youth to youth, as indeed no memories are livelier than those of the days "when we were girls together." The Editor of *Libraries* would be remembered easily enough by librarians of all classes, but Miss Ahern, as an individual, has remained a source of inspiration to several generations of budding library persons, just because the buoyancy of youth and a firm will remain with her. She may rise from her editorial chair and imagine that she needs a rest, but even if the Editor rests, the *Counsellor* will stay active. There is none among us better fitted to advise and influence those many youngsters who ask with wide-eyed serious eagerness: "What may I do to become a useful librarian?" Year by year she has talked with such, infused her humanity into them, made contacts for them, exhorted and warned them. What do we not owe her for the cheer, courage, insight, uplift, provided by her sympathies and treasured in memory because the fire and faith of youth went into it all!

Time is an element in all our lives, but change cannot be mentioned in connection with Miss Ahern. In most of us time and change go together. Women, on the whole, have determined important developments in public library service during the life of *Public Libraries* and *Libraries*, and in this work Miss Ahern's editorial and personal efforts stand out as an historical continuity of will-power and foresight. Why? Well, Miss Ahern's other Hoosier friend, Meredith Nicholson, states it clearly over his signature in these well considered words: "The average American woman is more open-minded than the average man, more hospitable to new ideas." Think it over, Gentlemen—deliberately said by Mr. Meredith Nicholson.

Probably some will think that the

cessation of *Libraries* indicates a change in our minds from the universal to other, specialized, stringent conceptions; and that "News from the field," "Interesting things in print," letters from readers and directive editorial corollaries or words of wisdom, are to be supplanted by new units of library journalism. That may be. But the truth remains that thousands—that is, more than hundreds—of library practitioners would read *Libraries* from cover to cover, month after month, while they perused selected portions

of other library periodicals. *Libraries* TALKED to its readers, just as its editor talks to old and young. Two minutes ago I did not know that I should write this characterization; now that it is written, I can think of no greater praise of Miss Ahern's accomplishment.

Henceforth, our young colleagues in the library schools may have the privilege of Miss Ahern's advice and inspiration—educational elements as necessary as instruction and training. What did Charles Lamb say about Librarians?

The Ever Ready Spirit of Helpfulness

George B. Utley, librarian, The Newberry library

The announcement that *Libraries* is to discontinue publication at the end of the present year comes as a regret to us all. This magazine, which we knew so long as *Public Libraries* that we have never become accustomed to its new name, has been associated with the entire vocational life and experiences of most of us. Begun in 1896, its professional career has been longer than that of most of its present-day readers.

Any expression concerning *Public Libraries* (one cannot easily think of it by any other name), any appreciation of what it has stood for or accomplished, or any attempt at acknowledging a debt, is indissolubly mingled and merged with that capable and forceful personality who, throughout its whole history of thirty-six years, has been its editor, its guiding spirit and controller of its destiny. It is, and always has been, impossible to think of *Public Libraries* save in terms of Mary Eileen Ahern. But now, it appears, we shall no longer be able to think of these two in this inter-relationship, as *Libraries*, we are informed, has reached the end of its course. But Miss Ahern, our good and tried friend, is still our companion on the

march, and we shall hope to see her quite as in times past, keeping intact her remarkable unbroken record of attendance at A. L. A. conferences, in which she took justifiable pride, participating with us in consideration of ways and means for the common good, and ever ready to give sound counsel and wise advice.

For thirty-six years Miss Ahern's magazine has been a regular visitor to our libraries and to our office desks. It has filled a distinct need, serving chiefly perhaps the smaller public library and the librarian of limited experience, but having as well many helpful messages and thought-provoking papers for the larger institutions and the more experienced in the craft. All of us will miss its clear, direct speech, its courage in expression of convictions, and its sincere desire to serve the library weal to the best of the ability of editor and publisher.

Although we cannot think of *Libraries* save in terms of its editor, we have learned to think of Mary Eileen Ahern in many other terms; for, devoted as she always has been to her paper, her interests have been wider and her desire and ability to serve have been expressed in many other channels. Few others in

our common profession have so often and so effectively extended the helping hand and the helpful word of counsel. Hundreds of now capable and prominent librarians have in their younger and less experienced days received from her sound advice and words of encouragement that have helped to shape their careers and make them a credit and an asset to their profession. By her intimate and superior knowledge of conditions in the library field, Miss Ahern, more than anyone else we know, was for years instrumental in bringing together the job and the deserving person. Back in the days before the A. L. A. had been able to develop effectively its personnel service, her interest and her help could always be generously and freely secured. Trustees in all parts of the country leaned on her for advice, not only about running their libraries, but for suggestions and recommendations in securing the best available persons to run them. Often her days were so fully spent in this professional altruism that her nights had to be spent in the preparation of her magazine. For Miss Ahern, however, librarianship has had no water-

tight compartments; to her it has all been one vast enterprise, and the question of solving problems of others has always loomed larger than the consideration of her own problems. This fine characteristic in Miss Ahern was most wonderfully seen in the early days when the A. L. A. was struggling to establish national headquarters. Her familiarity with all the problems involved, and her determination and support helped to carry the A. L. A. over many hard places. One who was for some years in intimate relationship to that early development is grateful for this opportunity to pay his humble tribute to her ever ready spirit of helpfulness, her loyalty to the enterprise and her practical assistance in the solution of many difficult problems.

Miss Ahern's friends, in this final number of *Libraries*, extend their grateful appreciation of what she has contributed to librarianship in the pages of her magazine, but beyond that are glad of this opportunity to record their recognition of the yeoman service and notable contribution she has made and will continue to make through many other ways and means.

An Inspiration to Thousands

Theodore W. Koch, librarian, Northwestern University library

My office in the Library of Northwestern University does not have room for many books, but I long since saw to it that accommodations were provided for that valuable five-foot-shelf of professional literature known as *Public Libraries* and latterly as *Libraries*. The thirty-six stout volumes face me as I pen these lines; they are within easy reach as I dictate my daily correspondence, and if I am not as familiar as I should be with all the bibliothecal wisdom contained within their covers, I take refuge in the story of the old clergy-

man of colonial days whom a colleague chided when he dropped in and found dust on the clergyman's Greek Testament. "You have no idea what an inspiration that volume has been to me," said the confused owner of the sacred book. So I say to Miss Ahern, as she lays down her editorial pen: Your periodical has been an inspiration to literally thousands of workers in the library field, some mere beginners but also to many others who have grown old in professional library service. You have always stood for the highest ideals; you have

constantly championed what seemed the right course, even though it might not be the popular one toward which the crowd seemed to be hurrying. You have invariably stood for full and free discussion of every mooted question and have claimed the right to look at it from various angles. You have refused to accept *obiter dicta* without rigid scrutiny. You have been fearless in the championship of what you thought to be the right. You never courted favor at the expense of your convictions.

At the meetings of the American Library Association your kind and hearty words of greeting have encouraged many a humble worker in the library field.

Your friendship has been prized by both young and old, by those who were just starting on their library careers and by those who had seen many years of service.

Your unflagging interest in the welfare of the Illinois Library Association and your guiding influence in the deliberations of the American Library Institute, have been greatly appreciated by your colleagues in these two organizations. I am sure that I am voicing the heartfelt sentiment of your many friends when I say, may you long be spared to share in our counsels, and to give us the benefit of your rich experience.

Salve, but by no means Vale!

Her Most Enduring Contribution

Louise B. Krause, librarian, H. M. Byllesby and Company, Chicago

There are many librarians better qualified than I to estimate the far-reaching influence and the valuable contribution which *Libraries* has made to the advancement of library development in this country for over a third of a century, and so in making my small contribution to this last number of *Libraries* I am taking the privilege of stepping aside from the professional subject of what *Libraries* has accomplished, to give expression to what I believe in the last analysis has been the greatest and most enduring contribution that Mary Eileen Ahern has made to the library world.

To state it very simply, it has been, in addition to the mastery of library problems, her large gift of sympathy, human understanding and helpfulness to the many librarians who have turned to her in times of perplexity and discouragement for advice on personal and library problems.

I repeat it thoughtfully and deliberately when I say that I believe no other one person in the library profession has

made so large and so enduring a gift of sympathy and human understanding to individual librarians as has Miss Ahern.

If the walls of her office could tell tales, we should hear remarkable stories; stories of many plans and projects put into motion for the highest good of librarianship as she saw it; stories of timid young librarians (of whom I was one) fresh from library schools, who came to her for counsel and advice; stories of poor aspirants on the lowest rung of the ladder; stories of wealthy trustees of endowed libraries who came to her for advice on the final selection of their librarians; stories of all sorts and conditions of librarians, to whom, one and all, she gave inspirational and sound advice—a true democrat in the highest meaning of the word democracy.

Many years before the A. L. A. had a personnel department, Miss Ahern was a whole personnel bureau in herself, not because she planned to be, but because her interest in library development and

in librarians was so vital and so unselfish that she never lost an opportunity to give service.

Many successful librarians owe their start and especially their opportunities for advancement to Mary Eileen Ahern; often she has gambled on her faith in other people and their ability to make good as she has shoved them hard into new fields of library endeavor, and with few exceptions they did make good.

Never has she sought any personal, selfish interest in the helping of librarians to find themselves and to do their very best work. Her one great aim was to make *Libraries* a power for good in

the advancement of the sum total of library progress.

Fearless and constructive in criticism, sometimes very warmly disagreeing with her library colleagues, she not only made a library periodical with a wide field of influence but by her unceasing confidence, sympathy and faith in other people she has *made* librarians. A host of loyal library friends now rise up to say that, much as they regret that *Libraries* is to be no longer with them, they are consoled to know that Miss Ahern is still "going strong" in service to the many who for long years have called her "friend."

The Committee's Judgment Was Good

Theresa West Elmendorf

It is pleasant to be allowed to be one of those who are saying "Goodbye" to *Libraries* and are wishing the heartiest of good wishes to its only editor, now retiring.

There is wistful regret in knowing that what was born *Public Libraries*, and only in later years received its present baptism, has heard the signal for its final curtain. We are not saying goodbye to the editor. We shall have her still with us and it will be no surprise, if need should appear, if that clear, Celtic voice rings out in the same old courageous, energetic way.

It is quite fitting, perhaps, that I should take part in this chorus of good will for I was one of the group, and the only one still on the rolls of the A. L. A., which was responsible for the founding of *Public Libraries* and for the selection of its editor.

In 1896, the year of founding, all through the great, busy Middle West the library idea was in the air. Hundreds of libraries were coming into existence with great enthusiasm and very little money. Many of them very much needed,

and knew that they needed, both advice and information. The *Library Journal* was fulfilling its fine mission in New York but its price was high, its attention largely directed to the questions of large library development and it did not reach the little libraries which had book funds ranging from fifty dollars a year up to small hundreds. The librarians of large libraries received many letters of inquiry and they were glad to pass along as well as they could by correspondence what they had learned by experience. It was nevertheless a tax on their busy days. Thence came the wish for a less expensive periodical that could tell to the new libraries all at once, and not one by one, at least some of the things they needed to know.

Herbert E. Davidson was then Vice President of Library Bureau which was Melvil Dewey's early experiment in business in Boston. Mr. Davidson had acquired and kept a warm and more than business desiring interest in the library movement. George B. Meleney, manager of the Chicago office of Library Bureau, was the guide, philosopher and

friend of his customers as well as an acute business man, Henry L. Elmen-dorf, then librarian of the Public library at St. Joseph, Mo., and secretary of the A. L. A., had in both capacities direct contact with the needs of forming libraries. Just why Theresa West, the fourth member of this uninstructed committee, was selected it might be hard to say. Perhaps it was thought she might influence Mr. Davidson to loosen the purse strings of L. B. to the new enterprise.

The committee met at St. Louis and discussed the matter of a new periodical, and Mr. Davidson agreed to finance it. At a later meeting of the committee at Racine, Wisconsin, during the meeting of the Wisconsin Library association, the editorship of the fledgling journal

was offered to Mary Eileen Ahern, then a member of the library class of Armour Institute, Chicago. Miss Ahern hesitated, modestly depreciatory of her fitness for the work. One of the committee turned to her and said, "Miss Ahern, you would respect the opinion of this group of people on almost any subject, can you not trust it in this matter?"

She did accept, as you know, and you may turn to the long row of volumes as they stand on the shelves of many a library and find abundant proof that the committee's judgment was good. Miss Ahern's service has been devoted and able, her courage unfailing, and the product we have all admired and used. Good luck to her in what she chooses to do in her well-earned leisure!

A Notable Record

Melvil Dewey

Miss Ahern in the past 36 years has completed 36 volumes of which eni leader myt justli be veri proud. In all thez years she has been 'featured' in the stedi succeſſion of librari 'movies.' Her interests wer nation-wyd. She was a frequent visitor to skors of librari centers & knew personali perhaps mor librari leaders & workers than eni other ALA member. Her keen Irish wit & sense of humor made her always interesting. Her outspoken franknes often got on the toes of the supersentitif. Her lance was bryt & keen & was always in poise when needed. Her keen mind & fasil pen wer enlisted promptli in everi good librari cauz. If we had to elekt a 'librarian militant' she wd be sure of the votes.

It seems onli yesterday that I diskust with her ernestli the policies & form of the nu periodical which was to ask & receiv the suport of the profesion. Her mind was a hy speed enjin that never

stalld. She was usuali a warm suporter of enithing that gave promis of helping the librari profesion to a hyer plane, & it was never dificult to find out why she withheld her suport from mezures which her keen mind cd not aprove.

She has always abyded by the program I urjd when as founder of Library Bureau I was consulted as to the nu journal. Its syz & larj, clear typ in dubl columns have made it always a fizikal delty to read.

Libraries under another editor cd never be just the same. From the 1st number her personaliti has been stamp't on her magazine & ther is a fitting digniti in marking her retirement by clozing her 36 volumes as a stori completed.

The editor has laid down her fasil, efisient & sumtym's militant pen but we all hope that her voice for meni mor years wil be herd in librari counsel in which she has so long playd so prominent a part.

Public Libraries and the Field of Higher Education and Research

Frank K. Walter, librarian, University of Minnesota

When *Public Libraries* was started thirty-six years ago, there was a real reason for its name. The leading spirit in the movement which resulted in its founding proudly bore throughout his life the name of one of New England's famous divines, John Cotton. He was a graduate of one of New England's oldest colleges. Despite this he had already begun to rebel against the real or fancied domination of academically minded men in American library affairs. Most of his colleagues on the advisory editorial board of the new publication were, like Mr. Dana, much more in sympathy with the rising tide of interest in popular, circulating libraries than in things collegiate or academic. The college graduate was abroad in the land but not in sufficient quantities to be a drug on the labor market. Modern research, if not in its infancy, was at least in its modest youth. The educational survey had not been evolved and the questionnaire, though not unknown, was comparatively innocuous. Percentiles were mainly confined to financial matters and statistical articles and coefficients of correlations were seldom invoked. Ions and anions were quite unknown.

There was a real reason for calling the new publication *Public Libraries*. Every period has its rallying cry for the crusader and its own method for social amelioration or complete social salvation, according to the enthusiasm or social outlook of its crusaders. In the nineties, popular public libraries were not a generally accepted thing. There was much library territory still undeveloped. Very many stalwart Americans, unprovided with suitable library facilities, were quite content with their intellectual frugality. As they thought of the small territory developed and the wide field still in need of development there was good reason for the prime

movers of *Public Libraries* to adopt the words of Caleb: "Let us go up at once and possess it."

College and university libraries had not expanded greatly. An excellent normal school I attended boasted of its library of 8,000 volumes. One of the best of the small college libraries numbered only about 32,000 volumes and Harvard had only about 300,000. But the colleges were for the most part complacent with their library conditions or disinclined to have others meddle with their libraries. The fortresses of Academe were not good crusading ground nor were they really popular institutions in the wider, modern sense of the word. Such contributions as they were making to professional literature were rather adequately taken care of in the *Library Journal*. It had included Poole, Winsor, Cutter and Fletcher among its early contributors, editors and sub-editors. There was small reason for the new periodical to make a similar choice for its editor.

Nor did the new editorial board make such a selection. Instead it chose a graduate of a middle western normal school, a former student of a midwest library school and the former librarian of a central western state library. In every one of these capacities she had been a sincere supporter of the motto which was soon selected for the publication entrusted to her charge: "The public library is an integral part of public education."

Under the circumstances, failure to stress the college library or the claims of research work could not justly be considered a sin of either omission or commission. From the first, *Public Libraries* adhered to its original purpose of furnishing a forum for the discussion of the more practical aspects of library work and the problems and aspirations of the workers in the smaller libraries.

But, from the start, the wider interest of the editor in all kinds of library work led her to recognize the fact that the upper levels of popular education could no more be safely disregarded than the lower levels. Space had to be given, even in a professional journal devoted to another class of libraries, to news about and articles on the problems of college and research libraries. To be sure, the articles on research were usually classed as "reference work." That is what the research function of the library has been until a rather recent period and in a group of libraries, still relatively few. The conscious relation of library collections to the field of research has developed more slowly than we are sometimes inclined to think.

There would not be space enough in this number of *Libraries* to make a careful analysis of the space given to college and research work in the complete file of the magazine. Nor is such detailed analysis necessary. A few references must suffice.

In the first volume, the college librarian was discreetly silent. Aside from news notes, only one contribution—an article by Howard C. Clark on the new library building for Princeton—was devoted to other than public libraries. In volume two, A. V. Babine (then at Cornell) and P. F. Bicknell of the University of Illinois appear with articles on college library work. There were also numerous news notes and summary reports of papers and discussions of college library work. Lettie M. Crafts of the University of Minnesota Library contributed an article on the need of "Library Economy in the college curriculum." Some twenty-seven years elapsed before her ideas were included at all in the Minnesota curriculum.

In succeeding volumes, the meetings of the College and Reference Section of the American Library Association and papers on college and reference work

read at library meetings and elsewhere were given generous space either by summary or publication in full. Among those who contributed to such discussions may be mentioned at random: William H. Brett, Melvil Dewey (for "M.D." had been a college librarian as well as many other things), Olive Jones, James H. Canfield, Mary E. Hawley of the John Crerar Library, Louis N. Wilson of Clark University, Willis Kerr, Andrew Keogh, William Warner Bishop, Willard Austin of Cornell, Lucy M. Salmon of Vassar, and, in the more recent volumes, others still more or less prominent in college and university libraries and in reference work.

Throughout the entire life of the journal the news side of the college and reference library field was not neglected either in personnel notes or in information concerning gifts, administrative changes or other important matters.

If any one word could be adequately applied to the editor who is retiring from an uninterrupted period of thirty-six years in one editorial chair, it would be the inevitable even if overworked word, *service*. She has never been a bibliomaniac or a book collector. It was my good fortune to edit one number of *Public Libraries* during a brief absence of the real editor from Chicago. Long lines of books received for review were standing in and on the office book cases—not for the editor's private library, but for further service in homes and institutions that would otherwise be bookless, or at best not well supplied with books. It is significant that the only editorial on college work which a hasty examination of the file has brought to my notice was one on the place of the college library in public education. The purpose stressed was not erudition for the few or intensive training for the professional research worker but the cultural effect of a college library which aimed to serve the entire student body.

During the very brief editorial experience to which I have alluded, I also had an opportunity to learn Miss Ahern's general attitude toward college and university libraries. There was a vacancy in an important western university library. Several other vacancies or changes in policy were impending in other universities. A change in the Newberry library administration had just occurred. The question of a graduate library school was beginning to be formulated. In every one of these problems her attitude was one of keen, intelligent interest and of a genuine desire to be of any help possible. In no case that I recall did she fail to recognize the growing influence and importance of higher education and its relation to practical life and to the general welfare. She was genuinely concerned that those in responsible positions in the so-called "learned libraries" should have both adequate scholarship and a willingness to share it.

It is true that her greatest efforts have been in a different field. She has perhaps felt more at home there. Her sympathies have been with the smaller libraries of limited resources. She has fought the fight of the less articulate minority fearlessly, persistently and openly. The loan desk and the field trip have been nearer her heart than the private study or the complicated problem of bibliographical research. She has never forgotten the individual on either side of the library desk. Minute scholarship on technical points, conscious intellectual aristocracy and administrative bureaucracy have never appealed to her. Yet her service to the college library has not been inconsiderable. Many librarians, especially those in smaller places and

west of the Alleghenies, have learned most of what they know about American research and scholarly libraries from the columns of her magazine. Many of the articles on college and reference work she has accepted for publication have done wide service in library school classes. She has had the confidence and the friendship of many in the scholarly library field.

If the American college or university is to retain its influence it can only be through a genuine popular interest in culture as well as in training for gainful vocations. The industrial field will in all probability never be widely enough diversified to absorb unlimited numbers of college graduates in supervisory or research jobs. The demand for teachers of highly specialized parts of the so-called "cultural field" is not without limits. A truer appraisal of educational and cultural values must be more widely spread among the general public if a college education is to continue to be considered highly desirable. Research, too, will prosper only as there is an intelligent public that can appreciate the meaning and value of research and desire the products of cultural and technical research. Toward the spreading of this general intelligence and the formation of a reading public that seems to be at least beginning to place true values on the libraries of a scholarly type, *Public Libraries* and *Libraries* have made a genuine contribution. The real credit for most of this contribution is due to Mary Eileen Ahern, who for thirty-six years has given her very life to her periodical and has made it reflect a personality which will make its influence last long after its formal dissolution.



Early a Champion of School Library Organization

Harriet A. Wood, state supervisor of school libraries, Minnesota

Fortunate is the student whose course at the library school culminates in an American Library Association Conference. Happily for me the year at Albany was followed immediately by the meeting at Lakewood on Chautauqua. Those first contacts with the leaders of the profession made an indelible impression. Mary Eileen Ahern stands out in my memory because she helped to make the occasion especially significant. Her enthusiasm, her kindly interest in the inexperienced newcomer, and the fact that she, too, hailed from the Middle West all contributed to the development of a very real friendship, personal as well as professional.

Chicago early became Library Headquarters for travelers. As I passed through from my work in Iowa to my home in Michigan, a chat with Miss Ahern at the Library Bureau was a feature of every holiday trip. I was only one of the procession of librarians. We were recipients of her thoughtful generosity, her hospitality, her ready sympathy and her sound advice. We felt that she belonged to us. That we encroached upon her time is certain, but our welcome was hearty and we went back to our work with renewed courage. Advice was given frankly and freely.

Miss Ahern's background of teaching gave her an insight into the school's need for library service, and made her aware of the difficulties involved in organizing the modern school library.

Miss Ahern and Dr. Melvil Dewey were prime movers in the organization of the first library section of the National Education Association which met in Milwaukee, July, 1897. Miss Ahern was secretary and Dr. Dewey, chairman.

The relationship between the American Library Association and the National Education Association was established after much thought and effort. At this

time it is fitting to look back to the objectives stated in the first report of the Committee on Cooperation with the National Education Association which is signed by M. E. Ahern, Melvil Dewey, James H. Canfield and Martin Hensel:

"The endeavor has been along three lines: (1) to bring, effectively, to the attention of the normal schools of the country, the work of this committee as represented by the handbook on 'Instruction in library administration in normal schools'; (2) to obtain more effective official recognition of the work of this committee by the N. E. A.; (3) to interest school teachers in the study of library tools.

"Your committee reports with gratification the undoubted fact that there has come to the general public a widespread and sincere acceptance of that fundamental proposition upon which your committee is basing all its labors—that the public library is an integral part of the state system of public and free education.

"The committee would make the following recommendations:

"(1) That a closer relationship be attempted, between State library organizations and departments of public instruction, such as exists in Oregon, Rhode Island and some other states, the library department taking the initiative, if necessary;

"(2) That the A. L. A. program committee be encouraged to continue the policy of providing a place for representatives of the N. E. A. on the general program, at each succeeding meeting of the A. L. A."

Thus we see that school librarians are deeply indebted to Miss Ahern for her long, unfailing championship of the school library. We honor her and we shall continue to welcome her counsel and presence among us.

A Success from the Start

Dr. G. E. Wire, Worcester, Mass.

I well and truly remember the beginning of *Public Libraries*, over on Madison Street, Chicago, in the headquarters of the Library Bureau, Chicago, Mr. G. B. Meleney, manager. This was in 1896, just after my five and a half years' term in the Newberry Library. My personal copy had the bill for volume one bound in, and I may add I have a complete set to date, and have read them all, even the advertisements. It was of course a new venture to issue a technical journal, at a nominal price, and "for the good of the cause." L. B. had been in Chicago but a few years, but *Public Libraries* was a success from the start. It had a field all its own and it more than filled it. Just look at the list of its sponsors on pages 400-401, issue of November, 1931.

Of that list only Mr. Dewey and Mrs. Elmendorf survive. There were many of us lesser lights, and we did all we could to help.

Miss Ahern had been librarian of Indiana State Library and had taken a course in the then Armour Institute Library School. She speedily emerged into a career of many-sided usefulness, which we hope will continue for years to come. Editorial privileges, duties, and ethics were new to her, but what mattered that? Did she not come from Indiana where authors grow? That periodical certainly filled a long felt want, and that right speedily. All up and down that vast Mississippi Valley it found subscribers and made friends. Look at volume one, starting off with chapters of what afterward became Dana's Library primer.

Nothing like it had ever before appeared in print. I had the honor of appearing in the latter part of volume one, with an article on the D. C., newly

applied to the Evanston Public Library.

But Miss Ahern readily and naturally became more than editor, much more. She became the friend and confidante of all the overworked and worried librarians of her wide territory. As we all know, she became not so much the missionary of the Book. We had scores of librarians who could do that work, but she became a most efficient missionary of another type and kind. That was the day before we had so many library commissions, but state and local library associations were being organized all up and down the country. Miss Ahern spent years of her life attending these meetings, addressing them formally, and working informally to help the librarians with all sorts of technical difficulties. Particularly she was strong on the business side of conducting a library. That was a subject entirely neglected in library schools of that period. In my own collection of works on library subjects, I had at least a dozen manuals for small public libraries, some of them written by leaders in the profession, all of them stressing accessioning and cataloging, for they were up in those things, but they showed their utter ignorance of other matters which much concerned untaught and untrained librarians of small libraries, such as business letters, ordering, correspondence, how to get on with directors and trustees. Her correspondence along those lines must have been enormous. Miss Ahern was and is, a good fighter for, and in, any and every cause which needed her tongue and pen. Remember she is from Indiana, witty and wise at the same time; she held her own at all times, and against all comers. As we all know, she is your friend once and forever.

The Highest Ideals

W. E. Henry, dean emeritus, University of Washington library school

I first became acquainted with Miss Ahern in September, 1885, when I was made principal of the high school at Peru, Indiana, in which school she was already an assistant teacher. Some three or four years before our association in the high school I had seen her and had known of her efforts in obtaining her own education. She had worked hard and continuously in preparation for teaching, and was an excellent and devoted teacher, as exacting with herself as she was with her students in their work.

After four years as a teacher, as I recall it now, she was appointed assistant state librarian of Indiana and served from 1889 to 1893, then served as state librarian 1893-1895. She was a student in Armour Institute Library School 1895-1896, when she became editor of *Public Libraries*, which position she has filled with excellent success for the past thirty-six years.

I shall go no further into her educational experience, but devote some comment to her attitude and devotion to the interests of libraries and librarianship. In this hundreds of persons have known her even better perhaps than I have, because for the last twenty-five years I have given my time and energy to library service in the extreme northwest corner of the United States some distance removed from the great centers of library activity.

Since Miss Ahern's acceptance of the position she is now leaving she has held

to and strongly supported the highest ideals of public library service. She grew up under conditions that led her to see and comprehend what many good librarians never saw, namely, that that institution is one of the two greatest educational possibilities of the present age. She has seen that the library is the great democratic educational institution on an equal footing with, but very different from, the great monarchic institution, the school. In the latter one does what is assigned, and in the former he chooses and does what he likes. Miss Ahern has been a devout supporter of the public library because she believes so strongly in the individuality of people. She has been a democrat of the positive and elevated type, believing in educating the entire group by the help of the free public library.

We regret her withdrawal as editor from the advocacy and support of democratic education and wish that another may come forth to continue the work she has carried on so long and so well. Her positive manner has sometimes been misunderstood because she has stated so strongly and positively what had come to her through extensive and careful observation not open to all of us. We must believe that she has seriously and honestly done much in influencing the practice in, the faith in, and the hope for the library all through the middle and western area of the United States where help in administrative details was most needed and greatly appreciated.

"The library world without you at *Libraries* will never be the same to me. From my earliest entry into the library profession, you were always unfailingly kind and encouraging. You had an assured place but you made friends of the new and green young librarians and never made us feel our unimportance. Indeed, you always were a joy and an inspiration."

Tributes

Libraries without Miss Ahern is inconceivable; they were one in personality, in viewpoint, and in influence, and much as we shall miss the organ, it would have ceased to be itself were she no longer to inspire and animate it. Of course Miss Ahern had a professional career before she became its editor, as a few of us still remember; but for the great body of the profession Miss Ahern and *Libraries* were synonymous. Each had a devoted following because each was genuinely friendly, and each understood and expressed the opinions and interests of the less articulate among the profession. It was this warm, human quality that made *Libraries* especially the organ and mouthpiece of the smaller public libraries, though not published for them exclusively, by any means, a fact of which the change of name from *Public Libraries* to *Libraries* was an indication. Besides its warm friendliness *Libraries* derived from its editor a fearless independence in expressing its convictions even when they did not accord with official utterances, a broad international outlook, and a sympathy with newer trends in civic and political life. Miss Ahern is a public spirited citizen and a citizen not only of no mean city but also of no one state or country, and, freed from the burden of editorial responsibility, long may she continue a leader in civic, patriotic, and international activities!

Pratt Institute

JOSEPHINE ADAMS RATHBONE

The greatest loss to library work during these last years has been from the resignation and retirement of so many of our older members. I cannot see that our ability as "mixers" and our greater aptness in applying modern business methods and aims to library activities are at all commensurate to the losses sustained. These have been an idealism, a richness of nature and culture, a combination of fine personal and professional instincts—qualities which placed our librarians with their community leaders not simply because of the activity they represented, but because of what they, themselves, were.

Fortunately, Miss Ahern's withdrawal from the editorship of *Libraries* will not mean a cessation in her library interests, for she has much still to give. Her contributions are too many to mention, but one of the great ones has always been that intimate and personal touch in library work which has kept it vividly human. To her, library work has not simply been a business, but a great outlet for public service and for friendly sympathies with fellow-workers.

May we long have the benefit of her friendly interest, her clear-thinking brain, and her pungent criticism tempered with Celtic warm-heartedness and sympathy.

Public Library of Cincinnati

CHALMERS HADLEY

Let Indiana be outstanding in her tribute of homage and thanks to Mary Eileen Ahern. It was her spirit and leadership that made possible the development of a modern library system in the state. After four years as cataloger and assistant librarian Miss Ahern became State Librarian for a two year term, 1893-1895. For fifty years librarians had been appointed by the legislature, with more than one term the exception. Miss Ahern secured legislation placing the State Library under the control of the State Board of Education where it remained for twenty-eight years, growing in resources and influence. Miss Ahern in 1891 called the first meeting of librarians to establish the Indiana Library Association. This was a farsighted act, as the united efforts of all librarians and board members were needed to establish better library conditions, and their voluntary work tided over the period until the Public Library Commission could be established and carry the load officially. By inspiration, advice and active participation Miss Ahern has always been an important factor in securing library progress and advancement of a high character in her home state.

Then, we have also had the precious feeling that here is one of Indiana's daughters out in the wide world accomplishing things of which we at home are proud, inspiring and helping others to do those things which we approve and hold dear, ever reaching for the best and highest and leading others along the paths of high and earnest endeavor. We have recognized the importance of this "voice" in propelling our profession into the paths of progress and clarifying our vision of the ways opening before us. The task has not been easy, simple nor cheered along the way, but it has been done honestly, courageously and successfully. Mary Eileen Ahern, beloved daughter of Indiana, our heart's best blessing to you!

Indiana State Library

LOUIS J. BAILEY

For well-rounded development of a profession, two professional journals are always better than one. *Public Libraries*, more recently called *Libraries*, has played well its part as one of the two generally recognized American professional library periodicals. Miss Ahern, as Editor, is always alert, resourceful, outspoken, loyal to the profession and to its organizations, apt in discerning the relation of the work of libraries to other forms of educational endeavor, untiring in her labors for the recognition and promotion of librarianship, and long ago built up a clientele of personal and professional friends who assured steady support for her publication.

Whether she intended it or not, her periodical was "different," and this very quality adds to the permanent value of her work. Everyone will agree that a file of *Libraries* is essential to every student of American library development. We all regret exceedingly the passing of the periodical that has always been hers.

University of Illinois Library

P. L. WINDSOR

As editor of *Public Libraries* and *Libraries* Miss Ahern has been a very useful person within the profession. How frequently we turn to our bound files to "see what Miss Ahern says about that," few of us realized until the passing of the magazine was announced. Since then, I have never passed the shelves where those volumes stand that a sharp pang has not come upon me.

The intimacy between editor, contributor, and reader that was always apparent and the freedom to speak one's mind that was possible through its pages made *Libraries* and its forerunner valuable assets to the profession.

However, to those of us who have called Miss Ahern "Friend" over a long period of time, her work as editor was not so important as that other thing she managed to impart to tried and untried alike—a feeling of worthwhileness that is always a challenge to one's best endeavor.

That I might have a definite contribution to make to librarianship was an unthought of possibility until I met Miss Ahern. Then suddenly an obligation was laid upon me to give the best that I had to give, no matter how small or unimportant the best might be. I think this has probably been a common experience, especially with those just entering the library field.

That Miss Ahern may long continue to act as unofficial hostess standing at the gateway leading into the library world, that she may continue to act as friend and adviser to those who have entered the portals, and that she may find real happiness in her next professional adventure, is the great desire of her host of friends.

Public Library, Evansville, Ind. ETHEL F. MCCOLLOUGH

Among the notable members of the University of Illinois Library School Alumni Association are those first students who attended Armour Institute Library School before it was transferred to the University. One of the most distinguished of this group is Mary Eileen Ahern, editor of *Libraries*.

During all the years of the School's existence Miss Ahern has been its loyal supporter, ever concerned for its welfare and progress, and ever willing and eager to extend a helping hand to its graduates. In the pages of *Public Libraries* and *Libraries*, she has provided for faculty and students the needed materials for the teaching and study of library science.

The faculty of the University of Illinois Library School wish to express to Miss Ahern their appreciation of her loyalty and sincere interest in the School; to thank her for her inspiration, for the wise counsel she has given to beginners in the profession, and for her splendid assistance to the faculty in their teaching, by providing them with an enlightened, dependable "monthly review of library matters and methods," without which their work would have been less effective and useful. They send their best wishes for her happiness in continued service.

University of Illinois Library School

THE FACULTY

I have known Mary Eileen Ahern since the early days of the University of Chicago—"the gay nineties"—when I was Instructor in the Department of Education, "a youth to fortune and to fame unknown," and forced from my position to make addresses on educational subjects.

I think that it was at one of these "gatherings" I met her, and in her conquering Irish way she made such a deep impression on me that when I was translated into broader fields of education I early sought her guidance, for my apperception mass, library, included Miss Ahern. Indeed at the first meeting of the American Library Association which I attended after entering the profession, she was the first person to welcome me—and one needs a welcome when entering a profession by "some other way." I have never forgotten that welcome. It wasn't an effort for her. It was perfectly natural to remember her friends and to do everything she could for them.

And so during those two decades I have enjoyed her friendship, and agreed and disagreed with her in the way which is natural to our common ancestry. She has made a real, a vital contribution to library work, not only by her editorial notes, but much more by her enthusiasm and her forceful personality. That is what we need today, and I shall regret very very much the absence of her positive beliefs. I didn't always agree with them, and I am sure I often grieved her because of my unbelief, but when the "tumult and the shouting died and the captains and the kings departed" we got our breath and justified our positions, and each one felt the battle won.

I know she had prejudices. I think little of anyone who hasn't them. It generally describes the man who is colourless, the nice, drab colour which we are told never shows any marks.

She is colourful and attractive, and makes one believe the legend true that originally they all were Kings in Ireland.

Public Library, Toronto

GEORGE H. LOCKE

Change in familiar things is always regrettable, and the notice of the discontinuance of *Libraries* brought to mind the many helpful suggestions which we always found on its pages. Especially noteworthy has been the policy of a section for school libraries where practical help and inspiration greeted both the trained and the untrained school librarian.

Many of us recall the rare good times our contacts with Miss Ahern have meant to us, so we have an added sense of loss because we are not to hear from her each month through *Libraries'* pages.

May the many fine things she inaugurated be continued by other library publications and may Miss Ahern feel that her thirty-six years of editorial success have won her a deep place in our hearts and in professional history. What more could one ask!

Carnegie Library of Pittsburgh

MARY E. FOSTER

The stopping of *Libraries* leaves a gap in the library structure here in the Middle West. We have recognized Miss Ahern's especially close contact with this group of states, and have felt that through *Libraries* she brought us a particular understanding of our own problems.

Miss Ahern has always had a special place in the library life of Wisconsin. She has worked with the leaders in the library history of this state. She has attended summer conferences and meetings of the Wisconsin Library Association. She has long been on the list of special lecturers at the Wisconsin Library School and has often been the honored guest at the annual May Day breakfasts.

May we not hope that this change will bring to us all more frequent and more leisurely sharing in the wise counsel, the incisive judgments, and the ripe experience of this able adviser in public library work.

Wisconsin Free Library Commission

C. B. LESTER

When I read the notice about the discontinuance of *Libraries* naturally my first thought was how much we would miss Mary Eileen Ahern's vigorous comments on library matters and her lively descriptions of library meetings and events. And then as I thought of her outstanding qualities, one which has particularly endeared her to me came to mind—her willingness to encourage the pioneer in any field of library service. She has always been generous in her praise for an accomplishment in a new endeavor and the support she has given anyone seeking new light on old problems has been most gratifying to see. I know we shall all miss her official contributions to our work, but I am equally sure that we are united in hoping that she will continue to give us her personal friendship and her cheery company for many, many years to come.

California State Library

MABEL R. GILLIS

The news of Miss Ahern's retirement from the editorship of *Libraries* will bring to every American librarian of the past thirty years a keen sense of regret, which will be exceeded only by the recollection of the splendid service rendered to a new profession during an entire generation. In a popular sense, and by inclination having to do mainly with the librarians and affairs of small libraries, Miss Ahern has been bishop of an extended and populous library diocese. Through the columns of *Libraries*, by correspondence, and above all by inspiring personal conference and formal addresses, it is likely that her influence has been as great as that of any single member of the fraternity. That business readjustments have resulted in the discontinuance of the journal which her work has made so useful to librarians will only add to our regret that it removes her from active library work. Her service has

been international, generous, unselfish and ardent. Her friends—and there is no librarian who is not her friend—unite in warm wishes for her continued interest in and association with libraries and their activities.

New York State Library

J. I. WYER

No one has contributed in greater measure to sane progress in the work of public libraries throughout the United States than Mary Eileen Ahern. Her personal contacts with libraries and library workers have always been numerous, widespread and close. Her opinions on controverted matters have always been definite and clearly expressed. It has always been her aim to state and defend the truth as she saw it, and the logic of events has shown that she was right in an unusually large majority of instances.

It has been to the advantage of the Middle West to possess a library organ in Chicago—one of the precise kind that Miss Ahern has so ably conducted for so many years. We shall feel its loss, and especially shall we miss the opportunity of learning, from month to month, how the current happenings of the library world are regarded by an old friend, whose judgment we respect and whose trenchant style in its expression commands our admiration.

St. Louis Public Library

ARTHUR E. BOSTWICK

Among the thousands of librarians who read with regret the announcement that this is to be the final issue of *Libraries*, perhaps those who, like myself, have been its subscribers and readers from the very first issue of *Public Libraries* in May, 1896, will most poignantly feel its loss.

Few periodicals can show such a record of thirty-six years under one editor, and fewer still have been so completely the product of that editor's own initiative and planning.

In beginning its publication, Miss Ahern very wisely assembled a group of sponsors as contributing editors, and a distinguished list of names followed hers on the editorial page. It was headed by John Cotton Dana, Theresa West, and Henry L. Elmendorf, at that time respectively the president, vice-president, and secretary of the American Library Association; Frederick M. Crunden, Melvil Dewey, Caroline H. Garland, Caroline M. Hewins, F. H. Hild, Hannah P. James, Alice B. Kroeger, J. N. Larned, Thomas L. Montgomery, Mary W. Plummer, J. C. Rowell and Katherine L. Sharp completed the list.

These contributors were helpful in the successful launching of the magazine, but now for over thirty years the name of Mary Eileen Ahern has stood alone, and, throughout its entire existence, the periodical has consistently fulfilled the promises made in its first prospectus: "PUBLIC LIBRARIES, being brief in its leading articles, concise in its information, and newsy in all respects, and co-operating in carrying out the

plans of the American Library Association and various state associations, will be of value and interest to the entire library field." It has been an important factor in the advancement of libraries in America, and the complete story of all that it has given to librarians, in the way of helpful suggestion and inspiration, can probably never be told.

To its editor, with her never-failing zeal and devotion, her high ideals, her quick and understanding human sympathy, her ever-ready helpfulness, we owe a long-standing debt of gratitude, a gratitude intensified for most of us by the privilege of calling her "friend."

As one slight recognition of its permanent worth, and to increase its usefulness as a completed set, I should like to suggest that a plan be worked out for a cumulated index volume of *Libraries*.

Cleveland Public Library

LINDA A. EASTMAN

It was in the summer of 1894 that I first met Miss Ahern. The conference was being held at Lake Placid, and upon it descended a trio of middle westerners, Reuben Gold Thwaites, Miss Browning and Miss Ahern, who all immediately took their places in the front rank of the company. They brought an air of lightsomeness to the rather dignified assemblage for they were witty, clever, and keen on story-telling. I viewed Miss Ahern with admiration, slightly tempered with envy. She was so bright, so ready with speech, so able in argument, so everything that I was not. I think she thought I was a New England prig. I dare say I was, though I did not mean to be. But as years went on our friendship developed. I kept the admiration, untempered now by envy, and came to feel for her not only great respect for the wonderful work she has done, but also warm personal affection.

As for her magazine, I have read every word of every number ever published. When the State of New Hampshire was establishing libraries throughout the state, I happened to be on the committee for book selection and everywhere I recommended the taking of *Public Libraries*. I think it went into all the young libraries of the state, and I know it brought technical aid and encouragement of spirit to them all. Personally I shall miss its monthly visits and I wish for the retiring editor the best of health and strength and always the happy satisfaction of a great work well done.

Public Library, Dover, N. H. CAROLINE HARWOOD GARLAND

It is a pleasure to me, as an English librarian, to render my small tribute to Miss Ahern, and I am sure that every librarian and library assistant from the Atlantic to the Pacific would desire to join in the chorus of appreciation and personal affection. Is there any library where she has not been, any library conference or gathering in her own country which she has not attended? Doesn't everybody in the States, and many, many librarians abroad, know that mobile face, with its shrewd, kindly eyes, the humor, the good fellowship, the large charity, and the

intense faith in the cause with which she has so identified herself, and all the other things which make up that vivid personality? To these indeed I can testify as well as another, for I have known Miss Ahern ever since I first visited the States in the year of the St. Louis Exposition, and before that by reputation and by reading, as an outstanding figure in American librarianship. And great as her tangible achievements in the library field have been, I imagine that it is as a personal driving force that she has counted most. Nobody could meet her and be indifferent, and few I should suppose could be antagonistic; however sharp the criticism, the transparent honesty and frank *bonhomie* of the critic would neutralize its sting.

In England Miss Ahern has many friends, and the "gap" which she will leave behind her—unless, as we all hope, she will still be able to do work for the cause—will be felt over here as well as in her own land. We have come to regard her as part of the picture; she and *Libraries*—I put them intentionally in this order—are an institution. And I am glad that *Libraries* is not to be continued under other editorship—she created it, made it what it is, and without her it would not be *Libraries*.

Every movement has its "heroic" age, the age of the great pioneers, of the fundamental building. That age in modern librarianship seems to be passing. Melvil Dewey is still with us, and Herbert Putnam—I do not pretend to mention more than a few names which leap into my mind as I write—and Miss Ahern will take her rightful place in the story. And we, the rank and file, may take this unction to ourselves, that we were "there" along with them.

Public Library, Manchester, England L. STANLEY JAST

Miss Ahern was one of the first American librarians I ever met. The date of the meeting is for me unforgettable: 6 August, 1897. We met on the steamer "J. C. Stevenson," which was making a trip from Newcastle down the river Tyne as one of the courtesies shown to the visiting librarians who came to England to celebrate the fiftieth anniversary of the founding of the Library Association of the United Kingdom.

She was with her classmate at the Armour Library School, Miss Jessica S. Van Vliet, who was then the librarian of Armour Institute, and later my wife. The two were inseparable on that occasion, and they were together the next morning when I called at their hotel to take Miss Van Vliet to the railway station. None of us guessed at the time that I should marry Miss Van Vliet, and that "Eileen" would get me my first position when I came to the United States in February, 1899. Miss Ahern introduced me to Mr. Cooke, of Hayes, Cooke and Company, who had the idea that a bookstore catering specially to libraries should have its books arranged according to the Decimal classification, and Miss Ahern and Mr. Cooke decided that I was the person to do it, since I had recently published in Newcastle the catalog of a

branch library shelved on the Dewey system. Having finished that job, I went to the Atlanta Conference in May, and there I met Mr. J. L. Whitney of Boston, who remembered something I had done for him in Newcastle, and who promptly recommended me for a position at Yale about which Mr. Van Name had consulted him. I came to Yale in August, and on the 6th of August, 1900, "Eileen" came to my wedding in Oak Park, Illinois.

I have told this story for two reasons: because the recital will probably please Miss Ahern, and because her professional career will doubtless be taken care of adequately by other contributors. Her modest valedictory in the November *Libraries* leaves unstressed some of her chief contributions to our common work, and I hope that someone who knows more than I about school libraries will emphasize the important part she played in developing appropriate relations between schools and libraries. Her own training in a normal college, her experience as a teacher, her work in the organization of the Library Department of the National Education Association, and her activity as Secretary of that department for many years, gave an impetus to the scholarly movement which is bearing rich fruit. But it is the generous, warm-hearted woman that I want to write about. Younger members of the American Library Association, who have heard Miss Ahern lecture at library schools, or who know her only as a frequent and forceful speaker at conferences, or as the editor of a notable professional organ, see only one side of her character. Those who are favored with her friendship know also a faithful, loyal, and helpful fellow-worker.

Yale University Library

ANDREW KEOGH

To those who were in the midst of library activities during the nineties and since the beginning of this century, one of the most active factors in American library development during that significant period has been *Public Libraries* (later *Libraries*) under the guidance of Mary Eileen Ahern, and the discontinuance of the magazine, after a notable record of thirty-six years, seems to mark the end of a library era.

Fortunately the one who has created its spirit and given it leadership has the rare experience of rounding out its existence with the completion of this period without a break in its record. *Libraries* is Mary Eileen Ahern. Although in her own right she is a very real and dynamic personality, as an editor she is an institution! She has influenced library development, especially in the Middle West, in ways that cannot now be measured.

Congratulations are due on the rounded editorial career of Mary Eileen Ahern, whose happy privilege it has been to serve her beloved profession during these constructive years. Young librarians and those preparing for library work always found the Editor of *Libraries* a sympathetic and understanding friend, and, within the knowledge of this writer, many young aspirants to library service have found in her not only encouragement and sympathy but also financial help in securing their library training.

Nor should we be unmindful of the contribution Miss Ahern made in those years before the Great War in the frequent discussions that arose regarding the policies and progress of American librarianship, as represented in the American Library Association. Her ready wit and quick retort often suggested a solution of problems, or threw new light upon perplexing questions. During the war period her personal zeal and devotion were given in her overseas service, as well as were the pages of her magazine.

Other phases of Miss Ahern's honorable and constructive library service will doubtless be noted by those who were associated with her, but to the whole library profession her career as the one and only Editor of *Libraries* is an open record of which all are proud.

It is indeed a rare experience for one to have been privileged to transmute into visible and material form the results of years of devoted professional service; witness the thirty-six volumes of *Public Libraries* (now *Libraries*)—an enduring monument to the devoted and dynamic personality of Mary Eileen Ahern.

Greetings and best wishes go to her from many friends and associates, with the hope that many happy and rewarding years may be hers, with the possibility of her recording her own recollections and reflections of these fruitful years.

Cleveland

ALICE S. TYLER

It is with great regret I have learned that *Libraries* is to be discontinued. It is a magazine that has meant much to the library world and its workers and I know of no publication that can completely fill its place.

You are no doubt informed as to what it has done for librarians, but to one who for twenty-five years has stood on the side lines and tried, as a library trustee, to help direct the policies of a small library so as to give a maximum service with a minimum income, the magazine has been invaluable. The editorials have been terse, sparkling, and full of stimulation and inspiration, especially to those of us who could not attend the library conventions and so renew our enthusiasm.

It has always seemed to me the space given in reporting the helpful addresses at those conventions was most generous. Belonging for many years to the Indiana Association of Library Trustees, I know we always felt assured of the success of a meeting if Miss Ahern could be procured to give us a message. Not only through the pages of the magazine, whose policy she directed, was Miss Ahern helpful to libraries, but her response was prompt to any personal appeal.

The readers of *Libraries* were always made to feel she was there to serve and many times have we written to her personally for advice and always found that her years of experience in library work and her keen intellect were at our disposal. And so I repeat that I regret the passing of this publication with its helpful messages and the retirement of its editor from a field where she will be greatly missed.

Spencer, Ind.

EDNA F. SMITH

My appreciation of Miss Ahern covers an unbroken period of thirty-three years. While attending my first A. L. A. conference on the Chautauqua grounds, Lakewood, N. Y., in 1898, I was early discovered by her and made acquainted with Mr. Dewey and other notables in the library world. I fear that if I had not been assured by Miss Ahern and Mr. Dewey that my ignorance of the intricacies of cataloging would be no bar to my usefulness as a state librarian I should have gone back to journalism. Had this happened I would have missed the great adventure in the world of books which has filled these last years of my long life with a degree of soul-satisfaction undreamt of in my youth and middle life.

I am delighted to learn that in this (alas!) last issue of *Libraries*, my friend will be signally honored by tributes to her worth from her many librarian friends who know more intimately than I the wide range of her influence in library conferences, national, state, and local. I will, therefore, content myself with this personal tribute to my friend.

Iowa State Library

JOHNSON BRIGHAM

May I, as an Illinois librarian, offer a bit of tribute to Miss Ahern?

I first met Mary Eileen Ahern in 1904, in the garden of the Reuben Gold Thwaites home in Madison, where Miss Cornelia Marvin, then Secretary of the Wisconsin Library Commission, was entertaining a number of library school students. I thought Miss Ahern then one of the best informed, wittiest, and most exhilarating of women, and that first impression has never been changed. Since then, especially in the closer contacts of work in the Illinois Library Association in recent years, it has been my privilege to know and admire her many other fine qualities.

The value of her service to the Illinois Library Association can hardly be too highly estimated. A pioneer member, thrice president, she worked valiantly for all that she considered best for the library welfare of the state. No meeting was complete without her. Her genuine interest in the Association, her efforts to develop its potentialities to the utmost, and her faithful recording of the proceedings of its meetings, led to the designation in 1897 of *Public Libraries*, of which she was the editor, as the official organ of the Association, a prerogative which was relinquished only with the exit of its successor *Libraries* from the field of library periodicals.

The magazine she edited has so long been a vital factor in the development of library service, particularly in the Middle West, that the news of its discontinuance is received with reluctance. The feeling of regret at its passing is tempered, however, with a sense of satisfaction in that its continuance under another editor has not been considered. Throughout its entire existence it has ably represented the unusual gifts of its editor. It is well that its career closes under the same brilliant leadership it had in the beginning.

Illinois State Library

HARRIET M. SKOGH

WE HAVE taken the liberty, of which we hope both Miss Ahern and her correspondents will approve, of furnishing to the committee in charge of this closing number of *Libraries* the following excerpts from letters which have come recently to Miss Ahern's office. We hope it will not be out of place for us as publishers of *Libraries* thus to share with the friends of the periodical a few of the many kind expressions of appreciation which have been received.

LIBRARY BUREAU DIVISION

Excerpts from Letters

"You have done a most worth while work during these thirty-six years, and have builded even better than you knew. You have been a mother to the real library interests—have not joined in a stampede to so called 'advanced' ideas, but have continued on the even tenor of doing the right thing at the right time in the right way.

"When the new (?) ideas and fads have had their day your work will be appreciated even more than it is now—and, knowing how thoroughly it is appreciated at the present time, what more can I say?"

* * *

"No other periodical seemed so human and intimate."

* * *

"There certainly was plenty of room for *Libraries* in the library profession and it was needed."

* * *

"You did a large work in promoting library interest in the United States."

* * *

"I shall miss *Libraries* which I have been reading continuously for twenty-two years. I do not need to tell you that I have found it fresh, alive, interesting and fearless. I shall miss it and I thank you for all that I have gotten out of it."

* * *

"You can look with satisfaction on the contribution which you have made to library growth and development, and I am sure that there will be many ways in which you can use your experience for the benefit of libraries and librarians."

* * *

"I strenuously object to *Libraries* ceasing publication. I do not know just what to do about it, however."

* * *

"I feel that an old friend is passing out of my life, for *Libraries* and I have grown up together, and the magazine has been a constant and valued friend of mine since my early days—more than thirty years ago. Your magazine has been an inspiration and a help always, and I am sorry to see it go."

"I do not know of any publication which can take its place as it seems to be the most practical publication in the library field. This was in a very great measure due to the fact that you are a person possessed of imagination and at the same time having an abundance of practical common sense."

* * *

"I have enjoyed your work immensely. The vigor and snap and humor were ever refreshing."

* * *

"Just how we are going to keep house without *Libraries* is hard to imagine. We shall miss its keen comments on library doings, and the high standard you have set. You have carried the banner bravely, and we are grateful for your leadership and friendly helpfulness for all these years."

* * *

"I have been reading it regularly for years and, of course, always associated you with it. It has certainly rendered a valuable service to the library profession."

* * *

"You have certainly done a man's size job, not only in editing and carrying your magazine, but also all over that great Mississippi Valley, you have gone forth to exhort, and instruct, and most generally to encourage the struggling librarian."

* * *

"During my twelve years in library work *Libraries* has been a staunch friend—a friend I've eagerly looked forward to seeing each month. It has a distinct place in our profession which no other publication can fill.

" . . . What a haven of refuge your office has been through the years for scores of people needing advice and help. I, for one, with your office closed shall feel like a ship without a port."

* * *

"Even if *Libraries* is ceasing publication, I hope we shall have many more happy contacts with you and that you will not forget us as we never shall forget you."

* * *

"While my interest has been with the university libraries, I have found the material in your magazine of great help to me personally."

* * *

"I feel quite bereft, and I am sure thousands of librarians besides myself are hoping that we may hear from you officially and continue to have your example and help. I hope you will not consider this presumptuous. It comes from the heart."

* * *

"We shall certainly miss *Libraries* greatly, especially the library schools which have used it for so many years as the medium of communication with their scattered graduates."

"Certainly library literature will seem less interesting without the pungent comments of its columns."

* * *

"There is not any other magazine to take its place, so the library world will be poorer for its passing."

* * *

"I believe I bespeak the general opinion when I say that the position occupied by this magazine must remain unfilled."

* * *

"It is indeed a great shock to learn that *Libraries* is to discontinue publication. I really cannot think of a future that does not bring the familiar tan cover once a month."

* * *

"We will miss this magazine greatly as it has seemed a part of the library staff."

* * *

"I am extremely sorry to hear of the discontinuance of the publication which has had so long a career of usefulness, and has played so important a part in our professional development."

* * *

"I am sorry that *Libraries* is to cease publication. It has filled a place in the library profession which no other journal has covered and I know of no journal which will take up the work and publish the literature which your magazine has published during its long period of existence."

* * *

"I am sorry, both from the personal and professional standpoint. There is no other publication in the library field at present which contributes what it does."

* * *

"When a journal has had such a long and honored history, and has made such a distinct contribution to its field, it is indeed unfortunate for the profession that its publication cannot continue always. I hope you will accept, as a sincere expression to you personally, my congratulations upon your successful and able editorship of this periodical throughout its entire career. In retiring from this responsibility you will be richly compensated by the verdict 'well done' which librarians throughout the country will pass upon this most worthy enterprise which you have promoted for a full generation."

* * *

"You can have no feeling of work unfinished or carelessly done, for the magazine has always reflected the high standard for which you stand."

* * *

"Your professional ideals have given it a power which was always exerted for the betterment of librarianship."

* * *

"I am overwhelmed at our loss with *Libraries* gone and no Mary Eileen to head the hosts."

"The profession needs a journal that is independent and unafraid and progressive, and *Libraries* has been all of these."

* * *

"It has been a power in my library life almost from the time that I entered the profession. It has been at all times a guide, philosopher and friend, and it will seem very strange indeed not to have its monthly help and message."

* * *

"May I, a high school librarian in a rather small town, express my personal appreciation of *Libraries* and my regret that its publication is to be discontinued? I always looked forward to its coming. There were always some articles in the magazine practical enough to be a real help, and others big enough to be a real inspiration."

* * *

"We shall miss *Libraries* each month more than we can tell you. To us it has always been the most practical, useable, of any of our professional magazines. It is with real regret we see it discontinued. Perhaps the interval will give you opportunity to visit some of your friends in their home setting. The latchstring is always out for you here."

* * *

"Now I for one do not see how we can get along without this periodical, although of course we will still have you to inspire us."

* * *

"There are things that we take for granted, like day and night, and never give a thought but that they will continue right along year after year, and when we realize that we are living in a changing world and that nothing endures, we find it difficult to adjust ourselves to the new conditions."

* * *

"The passing of *Libraries* is a real tragedy and there is nothing to take its place."

* * *

"I am hoping that the announcement does not mean your withdrawal from library interest. I cannot imagine that!"

* * *

"You do not know me, but I feel that I know you and it was with a feeling of sorrow that I read that *Libraries* is to be discontinued. I have been reading the magazine for a little over twenty-four years and will miss it very much."

* * *

"You will not remember them, but on two occasions, at some inconvenience to yourself, you were of help to me in matters that meant a great deal to me, and I wish to take this opportunity to thank you again and to say that I wish you happiness and the best of success in whatever work you take up."

* * *

"The periodical will stand as a living tribute to you and to your sterling worth."

RESOLUTION

by the

CHICAGO LIBRARY CLUB

In offering a resolution of greetings to Miss Ahern and regret at the discontinuance of *Libraries*, at the October meeting of the Club, Mr. Utley said:

I appreciate the honor of having part in this resolution of affection and greeting.

During the twenty years which I myself have been a member of this club, Miss Ahern has been one of its most valued and valuable members. She has, I believe, contributed more to it in thought, time and energy than anyone who has been a member of it since its organization. As president, as member of various committees from time to time, and as a worker in the ranks she has always been foremost in emphasizing what this club should stand for and in helping it to attain the standards she has wished for it. If the Chicago Library Club has accomplished anything in the history of American librarianship or made any contribution of permanent value, it is due to Miss Ahern more than to any other member of it.

We are sorry she cannot be with us on this interesting occasion, the thirty-fifth anniversary of her membership in this organization. I move, Madam President, that the club vote enthusiastically to send her our affectionate greetings and our cordial expression of appreciation for all that she has meant to this club and to the members of it personally.

We have all of us seen with regret in the last number of *Libraries* the announcement that publication would cease at the close of the present calendar year. This professional journal, of which Miss Ahern has been creator and editor throughout its whole period of life, has filled a large place in our professional literature. Whether we are associated with municipal libraries, special libraries, school libraries or endowed libraries, its pages have brought us information and inspiration. We should be much poorer professionally had we not had *Public Libraries* (I cannot get used to its new name) all these years. I think it was Metternich who said, over a hundred years ago, "If Austria did not exist we should have to create it." It is so with *Public Libraries*; if Miss Ahern had not brought it into professional life and kept it there these many years, someone else would have had to create it. We shall now miss it greatly.

Miss Ahern has created in her years of work, a demand which will continue and, to my way of thinking, must somehow continue to be met. Therefore, Madam President, in sending our greetings and affectionate regards to Miss Ahern I move we join to that resolution, one of regret at the discontinuance of *Libraries* and our cordial appreciation of all which that magazine has meant to us these many years.

RESOLUTION
of
THE MINNESOTA LIBRARY ASSOCIATION

Meeting at Faribault, Oct. 8-10, 1931

The Minnesota Library Association learns with regret of the discontinuance of *Libraries* with the issue of December next. It is therefore

RESOLVED: That the Minnesota Library Association expresses its regrets at the retirement of **Miss Mary Eileen Ahern** from the editorship of *Libraries*—a position she has long and ably filled to the profit of the libraries of the entire country. With its regrets, the Association expresses its hope that the profession may still profit as occasion permits from Miss Ahern's experience and counsel and it extends its most sincere wishes that her greater leisure may be attended by the restful enjoyment her long and unselfish work for others has so richly earned.

Ethel I. Berry, Chairman

Clara F. Baldwin

Frank K. Walter

Resolutions Committee

RESOLUTION

by

THE ILLINOIS LIBRARY ASSOCIATION

Adopted at meeting in Peoria, October 23, 1931

The Association has learned with deep regret of the proposed discontinuation, at the end of the present year, of its official organ, *Libraries*. Starting publication in 1896, the year in which the Illinois Library Association was organized, and at once, by formal action, appointed its official organ, that professional journal and this professional organization have until now run concurrently their respective courses. Although perhaps a necessary step in these difficult economic days, the passing of our official organ is recognized as a serious loss to the corporate life of this Association and to every individual member of it.

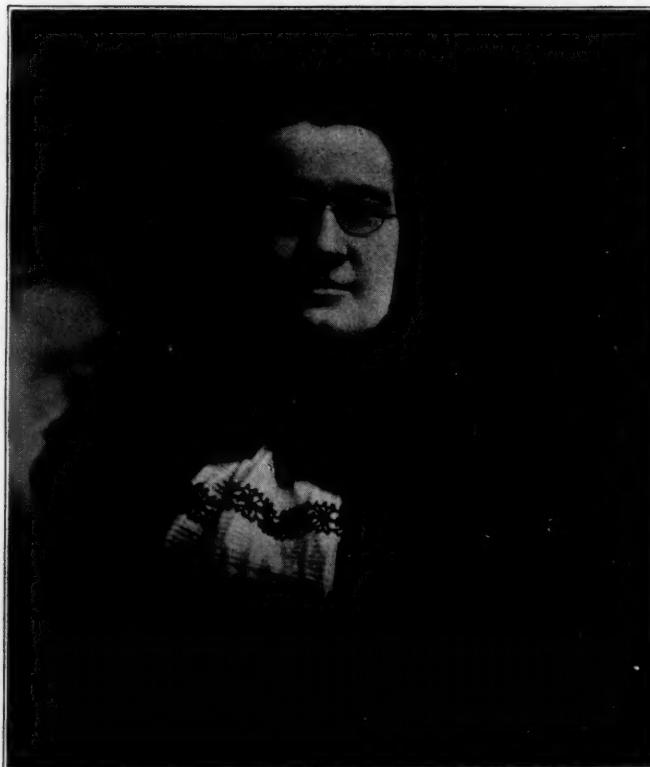
To Mary Eileen Ahern, its capable Editor during its entire span of more than thirty-five years, the Illinois Library Association owes a debt of gratitude for service which can never be repaid. Her time and thought so freely and ungrudgingly given, her wide and accurate knowledge of prevailing conditions, and her rare judgment in times of crisis, have helped more than any other factor in placing this Association in the sound and influential position it occupies today. As twice our President, as Chairman of numerous Committees, as Advisor in proposed library legislation, and as worker in the ranks, always present at our Annual conferences, Miss Ahern personally, and through her printed page, has been invaluable. During all these years her magazine, as our official organ, has faithfully and fully recorded our deliberations and interpreted our aims and policies. Be it therefore

RESOLVED, that

The Illinois Library Association hereby expresses and records its deep regret that with the termination of publication of *Libraries* this Association is left without an official organ; its hearty recognition of incalculable benefits received; and its sincere appreciation to its Editor, Mary Eileen Ahern, of her priceless services to this organization, and its assurance to her of its conviction that the severing of this official relationship will in no degree lessen her interest in this Association or her continued desire to be of service to it.

*P. L. Windsor, Chairman
George B. Utley
Mrs. Adele H. Maze
Jane P. Hubbell
Resolutions Committee*

As It Was in the Beginning



The Public Library Is an Integral Part of Public Education

(Editorial in *Public Libraries*, August, 1896, p. 134)

"Every librarian who has the good of the library cause at heart will rejoice at the formation at Buffalo of a library section of the N. E. A. Not since the formation of the A. L. A. in 1876 has so important an action to the library world, or indeed to the educational world at large, been taken. It forecasts united work on the part of both schools and libraries, and an influence for the up-building of human character that cannot

be overestimated. It proclaims that the day of solitary textbook drillings is at an end, and ushers in the time of looking to the nutrition of the faculties rather than to the accumulation of facts and figures. The recognition by the N. E. A. of the library as an important part of the educational structure of the day will give new life and added strength not only to the work of the library, but to the work of the school as well."

Index

Editorials are indicated by ed. in parentheses (ed.) preceding the page number; letters are indicated by the letter L in parentheses (L) preceding the page number. Deaths are indexed under the heading Deaths in library circles.

Academic freedom, alleged infringement of, investigated by American Association of University Professors, 11

Adams, Sir John, Librarian as integralist, 193; Who is Sir John Adams?, 249
— Joseph Quincy, appointment, 327

Adolescents, Adventures in reading for young people, Helen E. Haines, 185; Books for home reading for high schools, 101; Books young people prefer and why, May L. Becker, 323; list of modern love stories for children, 144; Most interesting books to boys and girls at various ages, W. W. Cox, 426; reading interests of high school pupils, 190; Tastes of the teens: books young people prefer and why, May L. Becker, 323; Young people's librarian and vocational guidance, Mary J. Cain, 423; Young people's reading round table at New Haven, 365

Adult education, E. D. Martin, 35; adult advisory work in Washington Public library, I. I. Swift, 111; adult education round table at New Haven, 361; grant from Buhl Foundation, 148; Preparedness of library for participation in adult education, C. P. Sherman, 411; Rural adult education and county library, A. S. Tyler, 62

Agricultural Library Notes wants news items, 398

Ahern, Mary Eileen, A parting word, 429; Ideals for a state library, 403; illness not serious, (ed.) 71; In sincere appreciation (L), 115; LIBRARIES resigns position as official organ, 336; portrait, facing, 429, 463; Review of first 25-years' activities of American Library Institute, 309; tributes to, by J. C. Bay, 433; Melvil Dewey, 438; T. W. Elmendorf, 437; W. E. Henry, 444; T. W. Koch, 435; L. B. Krause, 436; C. H. Milam, 432; C. B. Roden, 431; F. K. Waller, 439; G. E. Wire, 443; H. A. Wood, 442; G. B. Utley, 434, and others, 445-455; excerpts from letters, 456-459; *see also* Editorials

Alabama, bill for state library commission vetoed by governor, 386

Alberta, library service conference in, 131
Aldermen propose book shower for library, 408

Algeria, convention in, 115

All Bengal library association, meeting, 266

American Association of law libraries, new president, 422

— Association of university professors, *Monthly Bulletin* of, 11

American Library Association: activities committee, recommendations, 134; appeal for endowment fund brings loyal response, (ed.), 120; asked to help in time of financial depression, C. H. Milam, 422; budgets for 1931, preliminary, 134; college and reference section, new officers, 422; college library advisory service, proposed, 134; coming meetings at New Haven and New Orleans, (ed.) 205; committee appointed to coöperate with American Society for horticultural science, 263; committee on book production, proposal to publish books, 81; committee on work with foreigners, planning conference, 174; council approves plan for coöperation between committees of Bibliography and Resources of American libraries, 350; council discusses "Civil service relations" and the "Copyright bill," 351, 352; council meetings, program of, 22; council, midwinter meeting, 80; education committee, meeting, 84; Elizabeth Scripture, representative at International federation of home and school conference, 263; Emily V. D. Miller and Josephine Taber delegates to Algerian congress, 174; executive board, meeting, 134; faces an emergency (ed) 72; finances, 81; general sessions, 352, 353; "Going to A. L. A.", (ed.) 205; Graded buying list of books for children, approved, 134; L. R. Wilson, representative at English conference, 263; *Library Extension News* surveys library projects in New England, 407; life members (Example for others to follow: become a life member, S. N. C. Bogle), 248; M. G. Wyer, representative at conference of World federation of education associations, 263; message from the president, 341; Midwinter meeting (Neophytic observations), (ed.) 70; Midwinter meeting, report, 80; million dollar endowment fund goal reached, 354; nominating committee, better coöperation needed, (ed.) 163; nominating committee, report, 135; notes and news, 22, 92, 174, 263, 313, 378; officers elected, 356; Other A. L. A. visits to New England, (ed.) 250; post conference trip, 367; poster contest, winners of, 426; report of Book Production committee, 350; report of Committee on committees, 350; report of Committee on library revenues, 351; Section on Library work with children, plea for membership, 57; statistical service approved, 134; This president of ours (Josephine Adams Rathbone), A. F. P. Greer, 341; time for raising funds extended, 174; What of the size of A. L. A.

meetings, (ed.) 338; woman for next president (ed.) 161; women officers in, (ed.) 162

— New Haven meeting: (ed.) 298, 350, 366; adult education round table, 361; art reference round table, 361; assigning rooms, 212; catalog section, 356; children's section meeting, 358; council meeting, 350; county libraries section meeting, 357; hospital libraries round table, 361; important words from, (L) 398; junior college libraries round table, 362; lending section, meeting, 358; library buildings round table, 362; order and book selection round table, 363; post-conference motor tour, 173; programs of sections, 170, 267; public documents round table, 363; publicity round table, 364; readers' advisers' round table, 365; school libraries section, 359; special train, 367; training class section meeting, 359; travel notes, 212; trustees' section, meeting, 360; young people's reading round table, 365

— publications: *Booklist books* 1930, 271; *Booklist*, speeding up, 80; books for junior colleges, Hester, 313; *Bulletin*, (ed.) 299; *Bulletin*, report of editor of, 80; *Catalog*, 1926, reduced, 263; *Essentials in library administration*, McCullough and van Buren, 313; *Guide to Reference Books*, Mudge, 313; list on home library, 22; on display at New Haven, 378; 100 books chosen by prominent Americans, Goodman, 313; *One thousand useful books*, 22; *Reading with a Purpose series*, education required for, 89; *Reading with a Purpose series*, Evolution, 313; *Reading with a Purpose series* (Pacific area in international relations), 174; *Reading with a Purpose series* (Representative twentieth century Americans) 23; *Reading with a Purpose* (Russian literature), 174; *Reading with a Purpose series* (Russian literature, Yarmolinsky), 92; received appropriation for completion of list of serials of foreign governments, 313

American Library Institute, meeting at New Haven, 348; midwinter meeting, 81; review of 25 years' activities, Mary Eileen Ahern, 309; 25th anniversary meeting, 270

Anderes, Catherine, Staff meeting programs, 79

Andresen depository library bill, 363

Andrews, Clement W. (ed.) 15; portrait, facing, 1; sketch of, J. C. Bay, 1

Arizona library association, meeting, 24

Arkansas, library situation in, 236

— State library association, meeting, 87

Armstrong, Hazel E., appointment, 385

Art, Coordinating of community programs for art appreciation, F. A. Whiting, 353; reference round table at New Haven, 361

Assistants, Experiment in hiring student part-time assistants, Cecil J. McHale, 379; fund for student librarians, 210; Opinions by a new assistant, 248; Association of American library schools, meeting, 131, 366

Bailey, Louis J., Tribute to Miss Ahern, 446

Baillie, Erica, appointment, 106

Baker library issues lists covering political divisions of earth and various classes of industries, 78

Banning, Margaret C., Book evaluation, 34

Bansberia, India, library conference at, 369

Barnes, Clara M., Reviews of children's books, 49

Baroda librarians honored, 349

Barrette, Lydia Margaret, Rural membership scheme, 201

Barthelemy, M., Condition of books in Chicago, 317

Batchelder, Annie, Publicity thru school paper, 141

Bay, J. C., Dr. Clement Walker Andrews, 1; Personalia, 433

Becker, May Lambert, Tastes of the teens: books young people prefer and why, 323

Bedinger, Margery, Censorship of books by the library, 390

Beers, Ruth, Technique of classroom visit, 325

Belgium offers books, 68

Bellak, Evelyn, receives prize, 296

Bengal library association, meeting, 266

Bibliographical association, Inter-American, organization of, 124

— Society of America, meeting, 83

Bindery reference, convenient, for periodical workers, (L) 68

Biographic index, Catholic, 138

Blackhawk County library experiment, discontinuance of, 399; success of, 12

Blatt, Barbara, 1931 speaks, 277

Blind, Pratt bill for books for, 159

Block, Louis J., Collected writings of, offered free to libraries, 115

Board of Education for librarianship, representation on, 80

Bogle, Sarah C. N., Example for others to follow, 248

Bonnardot, Alfred, *Mirror of Parisian bibliophile*, 222

Book Week, announcement for, 346; Jewish, 164; radio in, 398

Bookman, reviews of children's books in, 51

Bookmobile (Pathfinder) proves successful, 124

Books, 49; appeal for books for Agricultural and Technical College, Greensboro, 157; book binding and repairing, Rademaekers & Son offer free instruction in, 247, 336; book budget, B. Carter, 143; children's, reviews of, C. M. Barnes, 49; collectors, presidents of United States as, 209; early printed books, collection of, loaned to Minneapolis public library, 319; evaluation, M. C. Banning, 34; for boys and girls since the time of Lincoln (symposium), 283; for home reading for high schools, 101; for Mexican children, 182; freak (suitcase library) (ed.)

253; freaks among, (ed) 253; modern love stories for boys and girls, 144; Most interesting books to boys and girls at various ages, W. W. Cox, 426; mutilation (Bookworm's brother), 282; mutilation, preventive against, (L) 295; newspaper cooperation on book news, 92; outstanding of 1930, 271; problem of duplicates, Margaret L. Richardson, 211; publishing, 413; rare, acquired by library of Congress, 234; rare, display at Newberry library, 176; rare, Dr. Butler on buying for Newberry library, 25; rare, thefts of, 137; rare, value not realized in some small libraries, (ed.) 160; recommended for retarded children, O. E. Powers, 322; report, E. P. Hess, 99; shower proposed by aldermen, 408; thief, warning against Harold B. Clark, 318; wagons, farming community objects to, 19

— reviewed: Bascom, Book selection, 46; Bonnardot, Mirror of Parisian bibliophile, tr. by T. W. Koch, 222; Browne, Unknown Indian, 46; *Burton Holmes Travel Travel Stories*, 47; Cunningham, A. S., Everything you want to know about the presidents, 190; Drury, Book Selection, 45; Drury, Order Work for Libraries, F. K., 45; Jeans, *Universe around us*, 95; Langdon-Davies, *Man and his universe*, 95; Librarians' Subscription Catalog and Guide to American Periodicals, 57; *Manual for school librarians and classroom teachers*, 103; Moore, *Three Owls*, 49; Olcutt, Wonder tales from Gob'in hills, 46; Rice, *Conquest of disease*, 95; Rior, Boys and girls of Happy Town, 399; Thomson, *Modern science*, 95

Bookshelves, sloping, for bottom shelf of stacks, 13

Bookworm's brother, 282

Borden, Arnold K., We need a philosophy, 175

Boston chapter, Special Libraries association, meeting, 215, 264

— group of catalogers, meeting, 87

Boston Globe, library of, 167

Bostwick, Arthur E., Mary Elizabeth Wood, 254; Reflections of a boss, 237; The librarian and rest of staff, 39; tribute to Miss Ahern, 450

Bowerman, George F., presentation of portrait of, 12

Boy Scout reading, Vera J. Prout, 54

Boys' Life, editor replies to article "Reviews of children's books", 101

Braille books, *see* Blind, books for

Brewitt, (Mrs.) T. R., Library terms, 295

Brigham, Harold F., goes to Louisville, 328

— Johnson, Tribute to Miss Ahern, 455

Broadcasting, *see* Radio

Brooklyn public library, report, 148, 286

Browning, Elizabeth Barrett, autograph letters of, 104

Buffalo *Courier-Express* links rotogravure section and radio, 245

Buisch, Louis H., Library staff, 39

Byrd, Richard E., children's tribute to, 146

Byrnes, Hazel W., Student centered college library, 107

Cain, Mary J., Young people's librarian and vocational guidance, 423

Calendar revision, 159

California library association, district meetings, 178; meeting, 215; second district, meeting, 24

— School library association, southern section, officers of, 326

— University of, library school, 139

Canadian northwest, library development in, 117

Canby, Henry Seidel, On too much reading, 405

Cannon, Carl L., Recent failure of copyright legislation, 257

Capuchin works, bibliography of, 136

Carey, Nellie M., appointment, 386

Carnegie Institute of Technology, library school, news, 96, 182, 223, 273, 319, 377, 420

Carter, Bertha, Book budget, 143

— Elizabeth, More light for charging and reference desks, (L) 294

Cataloging at Teachers college library, 184; Curse of bibliographical cataloging, E. C. Richardson, 348; from a reference viewpoint, Grace Walker, 241, 292; plus, Katherine H. Rock, 306; rules of Vatican library, new, T. W. Koch, 373; rules, simplified (Margaret Carpenter), 136

Catholic biographies, index to, 138

Censorship of books by the library, Margery Bedinger, 390

Cerro Gordo County, Iowa, rural membership scheme in, L. M. Barrette, 201

Charging books in a machine age, 34; Detroit system, R. A. Ulveling, (L) 69

Chase, George E., Journey to home of John L. Stoddard, 199

— Stuart, Use of leisure time, 355

Chemistry, list of books on pure chemistry, 271

Cheney, O. H., What are reading habits?, 329

Chicago Facts, 11

Chicago library club, meeting, 25, 88, 130, 219, 370, 415; resolution on discontinuance of LIBRARIES, 460

— public library faces serious financial situation, 304

— regional group of catalogers and classifiers, meeting, 129, 264

— University of, Graduate library school, 377; purchases rare gospel manuscripts, 318

Child health and protection, New Jersey conference on, 285; White House conference, on, Guerrier, 52

Children, Adventures in reading for young people, H. E. Haines, 185; Aesthetic values in children's reading, G. H. Hinkle, 216; annual conference on children's reading, 283; Book report, E. P. Hess, 99; book re-

Index

views in magazines for children, 51; books for, 35; Books for boys and girls since the time of Lincoln (symposium), 283; books for children learning English language, G. I. Dick, 231; Books for home reading for high schools, 101; books recommended for retarded children, O. E. Powers, 322; children's work in scheme of library service, 27; E. P. Dutton Fellowship for library work with children, 75, 337; modern love stories for, 144; new organization of children's workers, 146; Pirate reading club, D. Waugh, 102; reading interests of high school pupils, 190; reviews of children's books, Clara M. Barnes, 49; rural student membership in public library, 201; Tastes of the teens: books young people prefer and why, May L. Becker, 323; What do children read? (questionnaire), Marian A. Webb, 284

Children's librarians, meeting of, 145

Cigarettes, tax on, to support libraries, 19

Cincinnati public library and 25 other libraries coöperate, 149

Clark, Harold B., warning against, 318

Classification at Teachers College library, study of, 184

Cleveland public library, foreign literature division of, Edith Wirt, 305

Coatsworth, Elizabeth, receives Newbery medal, 296, 366

College of St. Catherine library school, 224

— Librarians of Middle West section, meeting, 84; and University and Reference Librarians, joint meeting, 86

Colleges, archives and printed matter by and about alumni, W. P. Lewis, 382; Junior college libraries round table at New Haven, 362; Student centered college library, H. W. Byrnes, 107; survey of land-grant colleges and universities, 225, 248; The emergence of the college library, L. R. Wilson, 354

Colorado library association, meeting, 26; joint meeting with Wyoming, 414

Columbia University to have new library building, 258, 302

Columbian library association, meeting, 213

Cooper, Isabella M., appointment, 427

Copyright and prohibition of books, Solberg, 82; bill, Vestal, 116; legislation, recent failure of, 257; Present relation of U. S. to international copyright, Thorwald Solberg, 349

County library and rural adult education, A. S. Tyler, 62; bill in New York providing for rural service, 158; funds for county libraries in Pennsylvania, 427; law enacted in Florida, 297; legislation should not be too detailed, (ed.) 206; states without county library laws, 297

Cowper, William, two-hundredth anniversary, 285

Cox, W. W., Most interesting books to boys and girls at various ages, 426

Crerar library, *see* John Crerar library

Cunningham, Jesse, Causes for obsolescence of library buildings, 396

Czech national museum, library of, 150

D. C., future of, Melvil Dewey, 202

Dana, John Cotton, memorial volume, 21

Davidson, Mrs. W. R., reappointed, 428

Davis, Winifred, New and significant reference books, 38

Dawley, Katherine, appointment, 328

Deaths in library circles: Adams, Edna C., 301; Alvord, Ella Parmelee, 58; Andrews, Clement W., J. C. Bay, 1, (ed.) 15; Belden, C. F. D., 427; Brandt, Margrethe D., 342; Brigham, Mrs. Johnson, 74; Brown, Walter L., 402; Brownne, John Smart, 164; Buckhous, Gertrude, 254; Chase, Frank H., 74; Davis, Olin S., 402; Drury, Mrs. Martha Walker, 21; Edgerton, Mary Pauline, 342; Fisk, Mary V., 164; Fox, Helen J., 74; Gilbert, Mary Jewett, 342; Harnsberger, Virginia, 121; Hayward, Mabel, 342; Hitt, Jesse Martin, 120; Klingelsmith, Margaret, 121; Knapp, Elizabeth, 207; Lane, William Coolidge, 155, 207; McQueen, Katherine Margaret, 121; Murphy, Grace C., 74; Patten, Katherine K., 164; Patton, Adah, 402; Settle, George T., 74; Taylor, Harriet S., 301; Thornton, Nell, 191; Vance, William J., 121; Wheelock, Webster, 208; White, Cornelia C., 120; Wicks, Sarah, 147; Wiggin, Frances Sedgwick, 121; Wood, Grace, 164; Wood, Mary Elizabeth, 254; Woods, Harriet de Kraff, 285

Deering Memorial library, T. W. Koch, 125

Denver, University of, School of Librarianship, 225, 321, 420

Depository library bill (Andresen), 363

Detroit charging system, R. A. Ulveling, (L) 69

Dewey, Melvil, A notable record, 438; Future of D. C., 201; letter to All-Bengal library association, 266; message to American library institute, 348

Dick, Grace I., For children learning English language, 231

Dickerson, L. L., Being fashioned into a librarian, 247

Dickinson, Sarah, anniversary celebrated, 192, 286

District of Columbia library association, meeting, 314

Dooley Memorial library, dedicated, 106

Drexel Institute library school, 47, 97, 139, 223, 273, 420

Drury, Francis K. W., goes to Nashville public library, 346

— Mr. Drury and the humanists, J. E. Towne, 59

Dulles, Joseph Heathy, resignation of, 327

Durand, Ruth Sawyer, Creative aspects of story telling, 412

Dutt, Newton M., honored, 349

Dutton (E. P.), Fellowship for library work with children, 75, 337

Easter, Marie, library named for, 302

Eastman, Linda A., tribute to Miss Ahern, 450

Eaton, Casindania, appointment, 427

Ebert, F. A., Training of a librarian, extract from, 122

Edition, Just what is an edition?, 375

Editorials: A time to begin and a time to end, 400; A. L. A. faces an emergency, 72; Appeal for endowment fund brings loyal response, 120; Budget reduction, 301; Clash or coöperation, 163; Clement W. Andrews, 15; College graduation vs. selection for entrance into library schools, 300; Coming A. L. A. meetings, 205; Concerning A. L. A. *Bulletin*, 299; Freaks among books, 253; Getting something for nothing, 206; "Going to A. L. A.", 205; Laborer is worthy of his hire, 204; Libraries and the jobless, 162; *Library Quarterly*, 73; Library service—a science? a philosophy? and art?, 340; Library terms, 252; Neophytic observations on midwinter meeting, 70; New Haven meeting, 298; Other A. L. A. visits to New England, 250; Proposed library legislation, 206; Public libraries and rare books, 160; Reference material, 14; Remember our heritage, 119; Rummaging in libraries, 118; Slow in responding, 163; What does one get from meetings, 72; What of the size of A. L. A. meetings, 338; Woman for next A. L. A. president, 161; Women officers in A. L. A., 162

Educational directory, 142

Elementary English Review, special number, 138

Elmendorf, Theresa West, Library and adult reader, 411; The committee's judgment was good, 437

Emory University alumni association receives Carnegie graduates, 337; library school, Graduates' association, anniversary, 47

Encyclopedias Britannica, 9th and 11th editions offered free, 337

—of Law offered as gift, (L) 11

England, Recent developments in library work in, E. C. Kyte, 354

English language, books for children learning English, G. I. Dick, 231

Enid (Oklahoma) Carnegie library, anniversary celebration, 106

Fellowship (E. P. Dutton) for library work with children, 75, 337; grants for graduate library study, 1931-32, 276

Ferguson, M. J., American library laws, 22

Field, Pearl I., celebration of anniversary, 302

Fines, ordinance passed by Toledo, 69

Fitzgerald, Francis E., appointment, 384

Flinn, Patricia, The Terrible trio (poem), 137

Florida library association, meeting, 219

Fogg, John B., appointment, 191

Foreign literature division, Cleveland public library, service to English speaking public, Edith Wirt, 305

Foster, Mary E., Tribute to Miss Ahern, 448

Frick Art reference library, retirement plan of, 13

Garland, Caroline H., Tribute to Miss Ahern, 451

General Federation of Women's Clubs planning nation wide survey of libraries, 409

Geographic News Bulletin, free distribution, 336

George Peabody College, *see* Peabody College for Teachers

Georgia library association, meeting, 314

Gifts: Butler University (rare books), 105; Duke University library (books), 236; Dwight Foster library, Ft. Atkinson, Wis. (children's room), 105; Emporia (Kan.) public library (fund), 428; Kellogg Public library, Green Bay Wis. (fund), 105, Lawrence College, Appleton, Wis. (fund) 105, 328; Morristown library, New Jersey (fund), 104; Peter White public library, Marquette (fund), 328; Randolph-Macon Woman's College (fund), 328; Rutgers University library, rare atlas, 303; University of Illinois (books), 328; Wisconsin State Historical Society library (books), 150; Yale University library (collection of Meredith's works), 327; Yale University library (letters and documents), 147; Yale University library (letters by Arnold to Clough), 234; Yale University library (Ruskin collection), 191; Yankton College (books), 192

Gillis, Mabel R., Tribute to Miss Ahern, 449

—memorial tablet, 215

Ginsberg, Marie, coming to United States, 182

Goshen (Ind.) Public library, report, 328

Gospel manuscripts, valuable, purchased by University of Chicago, 318

Greensboro (N. C.) Agricultural and Technical College asks for books, 157

Greenville County (S. C.), Tigerville branch, report, 150

Greer, Agnes F. P., This president of ours, 341

Guerrier, Edith, White House conference on child health and protection, 52

Guide to Periodicals (Severance), new edition, 337

Gutenberg Bible, facsimile of, presented to Meridian public library, 258, 261

Hadley, Chalmers, Tribute to Miss Ahern, 445

Haines, Helen E., Adventures in reading for young people, 185

Haish Memorial library, De Kalb, Ill., William R. Safford, 165; dedicated, 149

Hamilton, Fay, Sul Ross State Teachers' College library, 184

Hanson, J. C. M., doctorate to, 255

Harper, S. N., Publication under the Soviets, 88, Hasselbalch, Copenhagen, lending stamp of, (L) 11

Hawthorne, Nathaniel, reprint of life of, 402

Heller, James G., Pen against the sword, 40
 Henken, H., warning to librarian not to deal with, 201
 Henry, W. E., The highest ideals, 444; tribute to, 272
 Hess, E. Pearl, Book report, 99
 Hild, Frederick H., regional branch (Chicago) opened, 235
 Hill, Marie P., Double-fire publicity, 245
 Hinkle, George H.; Aesthetic values in children's reading, 216
 Hitt, Eleanor, appointment, 106
 Hoff, Ruth, appointment, 236
 Hoover War library, organization and administration of, Nathan van Patten, 151
 Hope, Louise K., resignation, 104
Horn Book, 50
 Hospital librarians of public library, St. Paul, meeting, 30
 — libraries, list of new books for, 232; round-table at Indiana and Ohio joint meeting, 42; round table at New Haven, 361; service, 37
 Howell, Isabel, appointment, 328
 Hughes, Mary W., appointment, 286
 Illinois library association, program for meeting, 347; resolution on discontinuance of LIBRARIES, 462
 — University of, library school, 273, 377
 Income tax on library salaries, reversal of opinion on, 340
 Indiana and Ohio joint meetings, 39
 Industrial department to be opened in Syracuse Public library, 296
 Industries, list of, issued by Baker library, 78
 Insurance for libraries, 37
 Intellectual freedom and integrity, Adam Strohm, 287
 Inter-American Bibliographical association, formation of, 124, 180
 Interesting things in print: Accredited secondary schools in U. S., and Accredited higher institutions, Bulletin U. S. Office of Education, 135; Achelles, Journal of calendar reform, 317; Allen, Story of the airship, 221; American Association for adult education, Unemployment and adult education, 181; American bibliography, 419; Beman, Censorship of speech, 92; Beman, Selected articles on censorship of theater and moving pictures, 135; Benjamin Strong collection of foreign public finance, report, 93; Bibliography of bibliographies, 372; Bowerman, Censorship and the public library with other papers, 222; Catalog of U. S. Government publications on education, 372; Cestre and Leroy, French books for American libraries, 270; *Chicago Tribune* library, 419; Cleveland public library, Books and pamphlets on Russia, 318; Community planning in unemployment emergencies, Russell Sage Foundation, 93, Compton's Pictured Encyclopedia, 373; Connor, Practical bibliography making with problems and examples, 317; Dickerson, Radio in education, 271; Doll convention, 94; Dutton, Murder in a library, 181; Elmendorf, Mrs. Theresa West, life of, in *Bulletin of Bibliography* 417; Elmendorf, Poetry and poets, 373; First editions of Johnsoniana and other English literature, 317; Foyles' American catalogs, 181; Frey and Clarke, Decay of bookbinding leathers, 419; Goldstein, Italians of Boston, 419; Goldstein, Judaica, 270; Greenleaf, Careers, 180; Handbook of commercial and financial information service, 93; Handy, Insurance books in public libraries, 270; Hendry, Technical books of 1930, 418; Herring and Terrill, Genius of Mexico, 222; Hyde and Slown, Safety programs and activities, 181; Informal educational opportunities in Washington, 418; Johnsen, County libraries, 317; Kelley, *Catalogers' and Classifiers' Yearbook*, 270; Lahman, Debate coaching, 135; Library work for college women, *University of Buffalo Studies*, 45; *List of Serial Publications of Foreign Governments*, 44; Lynn, Cleanliness stories for children, 418; MacNair, American doctoral dissertations, 317; Mississippi Historical Society, Life, letters and papers of William Dunbar, 180; Organization of a small library, 94; Phillips, Polish books for public library, 374; Power, Library service for children, 92; *Railroad Information Yearbook*, 44; Ransome, Bibliography of puppets and shadows, 135; *Record of Current Educational Publications*, Office of Education, 93; *Reference Shelf* series, Trends in university education, 418; Russia and the five year plan, 318; Sears and Shaw, *Essay and General Literature Index*, 417; Silk and Farning, Index to parties, 136; Slosson, Dining on the Dewey system, 417; Smith, Union list of manuscripts in libraries of Pacific Northwest, 271; Statistics on commodities, 419; Subject headings used in dictionary catalogues of Library of Congress, 418; Theses on Pan American topics, 419; Thompson, List of references on national economic councils, 419; *United States Daily Annual* index-digest, 419; *University Debater's Annual*, 418; Warren, Modern galaxy, 136; Winchell, Locating books for interlibrary loans, 271; World friendship thru children's books, St. Louis Public library, 92. International Institute of Bibliography, invitation to American librarians to attend meeting, 202
 — Mind Alcoves of Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, A. H. Jones, 34
 Iowa library association discontinues Blackhawk County library experiment, 399; meeting, 415
 — library experiment in, 12
 — University of, extension department conference for library workers, 370
 James, Verda I., Use of magazines in sophomore English, 230

Jast, L. Stanley, retirement of, 401; Tribute to Miss Ahern, 451

Jennings, Jennie T., appointment, 428

Jewish Book Week, 164

John Crerar library, report, 235

Jones, Amy H., International Mind Alcoves, 34

— Gardner M., retirement, 75; testimonial to, 255

— Hannah M., retires, 427

— library, Amherst, Mass., celebrates Founder's day, 384

Kalamazoo public library, work with schools, Louise Singley, 227

Kansas City (Mo.) Public library raises fund for student librarians, 210

— library association, meeting, 26

Keith, Effie A., review of *Mirror of Parisian bibliophile*, by Bonnardot, 222

— Nellie E., resignation, 106

Kempe, Rosalie, appointment, 385

Keogh, Andrew, Tribute to Miss Ahern, 452

Kern County free library, Bakersfield, Calif., new branches, 386

Kesler, Ruth, Librarian's place in present educational system, 279

Koch, Theodore W., An inspiration to thousands, 435; Dr. Clement W. Andrews, 15; New Deering Memorial library, 125; New Vatican library cataloging rules, 373; translator, *Mirror of Parisian bibliophile*, 222

Koopman, H. L., Flexibility vs. rigidity in library planning, 81

Krause, Louise B., Her most enduring contribution, 436

Krieg, Amelia, new assistant director of Illinois library school, 377

Kyte, E. Cockburn, Recent developments in library work in England, 354

Lake Forest public library, new building for, 304

— Placid, library week at, 409; proposed library colony at, 81

Lamb, J. P., praises Newark library methods, 327

Land-grant colleges and universities, survey of, F. K. Walter, 225, 248

de la Salle's School management, new translation, 103

Law encyclopedia offered as gift, (L) 11

League of library commissions, meeting at New Haven, 357; Midwinter meeting, 85

Ledbetter, Eleanor E., receives gold medal, 235

Legislation, *see* Censorship; Libraries

Lending stamp of Hasselbalch, (L) 11

Lester, C. B., Tribute to Miss Ahern, 449

Letters: A pioneer (Lending stamp of Hasselbalch), 11; Being fashioned into a librarian, 247; Bulletin of American Association of University Professors, 11; Concerning terminology again, 69; Convenient bindery reference for periodical workers, 68; Detroit charging system, 69; editor of *Boys' Life* replies to statement in Review of children's books, 101; Eliminating the trifler, 117; Emory alumni association receives Carnegie graduates, 337; Encyclopedia offered as gift, 11; Example for others to follow, 248; Fitzroy née Pfutzenreuter, 158; Group singing among librarians, 68; Important words from A. L. A. meetings, 398; In sincere appreciation, 115; Information wanted (about ownership of book) 68; LIBRARIES resigns position as official organ of I. L. A., 336; Library card mystery, 157; Library experiment in Iowa, 12; Library terms, 295; More light for charging and reference desks, 294; Not recommended, 248; Note to Veterans' hospital librarians, 201; Presentation of portrait, 12; Preventive against book mutilation, 295; Rural membership scheme, L. M. Barrette, 201; Same books, 11; Survey of land-grant colleges and university, 248; Warning to librarians in regard to H. Henken, 201

Lewis, Sinclair, award of Nobel prize to, objection by Van Dyke, 13

— Willard Potter, appointment, 327; Survey of land-grant colleges and universities, 248; The college collection, 382

Librarian and staff, A. E. Bostwick, 39; as integralist, Sir John Adams, 193; Being fashioned into a librarian, L. L. Dickerson, 247; education of librarian, 122; fund for student librarians, 210; Future of librarianship, S. B. Mitchell, 217; Laborer is worthy of his hire, (ed.) 204; librarianship among the professions, J. A. Canby, 407; Library service—a science?, a philosophy?, an art?, (ed.) 340; meaning of appellation, (ed.) 252; meeting of children's librarians, 145; meeting of librarians of large public libraries, 80; On "going" scientific, C. S. Thompson, 343, 348, 349; Place of librarian in present educational system, Ruth Kesler, 281; Reflections of a boss, Arthur E. Bostwick, 237; Technique of classroom visit, Ruth Beers, 325; The public and the librarian (reply to Miss Blackburn's article), 77; training for library work (1931 speaks), Barbara Blatt, 277; use of word, librarian, Mrs. T. R. Brewitt, (L) 295; We need a philosophy, A. K. Borden, 175; Young people's librarian and vocational guidance, Mary J. Cain, 423; *see also* Pensions; Salaries

Libraries and the jobless, (ed.) 162, (ed.) 301, 422; as agent for world peace, E. V. D. Miller, 5; budget reduction in time of depression, (ed.) 301; buildings, Causes of obsolescence of library buildings, Jesse Cunningham, 396; buildings round table at New Haven, 362; city libraries and non-resident borrowers, (Missionary spirit gone wrong, R. Munn), 114, (ed.) 119; co-operation: Cincinnati Public library and 25 others co-operate, 149; co-operation: travelers' library cards, 37; Eliminating the trifler, (L), 117; exhibit at Ter-

centenary celebration, 259; extension work, increased appropriations for, in 15 states, 297; for homes, A. L. A. list on, 22; growth of, 296; Ideals for a state library, Mary Eileen Ahern, 403; in Erie railroad station at Montclair, 191; in hospitals, list of new books for, 232; in railroad coach in Marin County, Calif., P. M. Walsh, 304; income: libraries receiving less and more than average income, 150, correction, 159; Intellectual freedom and integrity, Adam Strohm, 287; laws, American, 22; legislation, 297; named for librarians, 303; meetings, coming, 91, 132, 180, 220, 266, 316, 371, 417; meetings, What does one get from library meetings, (ed.) 72; More light for charging and reference desks, Elizabeth Carter, (L) 294; nation wide survey planned by General Federation of Women's Clubs, 409; planning, Koopman on, 81; Proposed library legislation, (ed.) 206; report, Toronto's new form approved, 203; science; place of library science in research, J. H. Shera, 387; service should be paid for (Getting something for nothing), (ed.) 206; service, worthy objectives necessary in, 263; staff, L. H. Buisch, 39; staff committee as an agent in administration, A. Winslow, 42; staff, programs for meetings, C. Andrews, 78; study and lecture tour in United States, Richard Oehler, 196; tax levy in Nebraska increased, 428; tax on cigarettes to support libraries, 18; tax reduction for Toledo library, 20; taxes; mistaken economy in library taxes, (ed.) 18; terminology, Mrs. T. R. Brewitt, (L) 295; terms, (ed.) 252; work in England, E. C. Kyte, 354; *see also* College libraries; County libraries; School libraries

LIBRARIES and its predecessor, PUBLIC LIBRARIES, history of, (ed.) 400; publishers announce discontinuance of, 1 (Nov.); reference material in, (ed.) 14; resigns position as official organ, 336; tributes to accomplishments of, C. B. Roden, F. K. Walter and others, 431-463

Library schools, college graduation vs. selection for entrance, (ed.) 300; new: Our Lady of the Lake College (San Antonio), 378; new: School of Librarianship University of Denver, Colorado, 225; new: School of Library Science, University of North Carolina, 225; summer, 183, 224; three new ones, 321

Library of Congress acquires books of late Czar, 327

— *Curriculum Studies: Order Work for Libraries and Book Selection*, by F. K. W. Drury, 45

— *Quarterly*, (ed.) 73

Light, better, for charging and reference desks, Elizabeth Carter, (L) 294

Lippincott's Gazetteer, no claim for revision, 336

Liveright, Ada F., Concerning terminology again, (L) 69; Fitzroy née Pfutzenreuter, (L) 158

Locke, George H., Tribute to Miss Ahern, 448

London Daily Express, presentations for children in, (ed.) 253

Los Angeles County free library, territory served by, 13

— public library, library school, 48, 97, 273, 377, 421

Louisiana demonstration, (ed.) 207

— library association, meeting, 264

— State University library school, 321

Louisville Public library celebrates anniversary of children's room, 58

Love stories, modern, for girls and boys, 144

McAllister, Samuel W., appointment, 58

MacCormick, Austin H., The library in prison, 410

McCullough, Ethel F., Tribute to Miss Ahern, 447

McHale, Cecil J., Experiment in hiring student part-time assistants, 379

MacKinney, Gertrude, becomes state librarian of Pennsylvania, 345

McMillen, James A., Librarianship among the professions, 407

Magazines, *see* Periodicals

Marin County free library (Port Reyes branch), housed in railroad coach, P. M. Walsh, 304

Mark Twain association, annual prize, 116

Martin, Helen, Art of story telling, 281

Maryland, Virginia and District of Columbia, meeting of regional group of catalogers, 316

Massachusetts division of public libraries, Department of education, conducts university extension course, 422; exhibit at Tercentenary celebration, 259

— library club, meeting, 87; officers, 371

Mattern, Johannes, receives fellowship grant, 203

May day—National Child Health Day, 190

Merrill, William Stetson, William Coolidge Lane, 1859-1931, 155

Mexican children, books for, 182

Mexico, seminar in, 157

Michigan, University of, Department of Library science, news, 274

Milam, Carl H., Miss Ahern and the associations, 432; President's Organization on Unemployment asks help of A. L. A., 422

Miller, E. V. D., Libraries as agents for world peace, 5

Millikin University, new library for, 159

Minister and the family, special reading list, A. G. Spencer and R. C. Dexter, 136

Minnesota Library association, resolution on discontinuance of LIBRARIES, 461

— University of, library school, news, 48

Mirror of Parisian bibliophile, Alfred Bonnardot, 222

Missionary spirit gone wrong, Ralph Munn 114, (ed.) 119

Mississippi library association, meeting, 28
 Mitchell, Sydney B., Future of librarianship, 217
 Moffat, Lucius G., to work on Portuguese documents, 327
 Moore, Persis, appointment, 384
 Muncie (Ind.) Public library, report, 149
 Munn, Ralph, Missionary spirit gone wrong, 114; Trust Research bureau not recommended, 248
 Murphy, Urban T., library card mystery, (L) 157
 Museum library at Sante Fe dedicated, 122
 Music, reading lists dealing with, 94

Nashville public library, Francis K. W. Drury appointed librarian, 346
 National association of Audubon Societies, offers colored bird pictures, 75
 — Catholic Educational association, meeting of, 129
 — Child Health Day, 190
 — Committee on home education, meeting of, 103
 — League of Women Voters, radio committee of, 21
 Nebraska legislature passes law permitting increase in tax levy, 286, 428
 — Public Library commission, meeting of, 130
 Negro librarians, professional education of, 177; library conference, 32
 New England, library extension in, 407
 New Jersey College for women, library school, 97, 139, 274
 — library association and Pennsylvania library club, joint meeting, 214
 New Mexico library association, meeting, 28
 New Orleans library club, organized, 416
 New York county library bill, 158
 — public library, anniversary celebration, 303; excludes school rummage studies, (ed.) 118; report, 147, 385
 — State College for Teachers, library school, news, 48
 — State library association, awards of, 296; meeting, 409
Newark Evening News coöperates on book news, 92
 — Music Foundation acquires Russell's music library, 327
 — public library praised by J. P. Lamb, 327; report, 427
 Newbery medal awarded to Elizabeth Coatsworth, 296, 366
 Newman, John Henry, appointment, 149
 Newspaper coöperation on book news, 92; library, 167; pages for children in, (ed.) 253; progress in preparation of checklist of newspapers, 83
 Non-resident borrowers and city libraries (Missionary spirit gone wrong, R. Munn), 114, (ed.) 119; rural membership scheme, L. M. Barrette, 201
 Norfolk (Va.) Public library, report, 150

Normal School and Teachers College section, meeting, 83
 North Carolina, University of, School of Library Science, 225, 321
 North Central library conference, 33
 Northwestern University, new Deering Memorial library, T. W. Koch, 125
 Novel, Stokes offers prize for best novel, 398

Oberly memorial prize, notice of, 12
 Oehler, Richard, Library study and lecture tour in United States, 196
 Ohio library association joint meeting with Indiana, 39; Ohio library trustees' association and West Virginia library association, joint meeting, 416; protests appointment of state librarian, 248
 Oklahoma library association, meeting, 177
 Oko, Adolph S., honored, 286
 Omaha Librarians' club, meeting, 315
 Ontario library association, meeting, 219
 — regional group of catalogers, 30, 219
 Oregon library association (eastern section), meeting, 315
 — State library, appropriation, 236
 Our Lady of the Lake College (San Antonio) school of library science, 378

Pacific Northwest library association, meeting, 368
 Package libraries in Texas, 23
 Park, Charles V., appointment, 149
 Pasadena library club, meeting, 29, 178, 315
 — opens two new branches, 236
 Pathfinder (bookmobile) proves successful, 124
 Peabody College for Teachers, library school, news, 139, 320
 Peace, libraries as agents for world peace, E. V. D. Miller, 5
 Pedagogy, package of Government publications useful to educators, 231
 Pennsylvania library club and New Jersey library association, joint meeting, 214
 — receives appropriation for county libraries, 427
 — State library, Gertrude MacKinney becomes librarian, 345; meeting, 29
 Pensions in Ontario, 220; laws, S. B. Askew, 214; plan adopted by Providence Public library, 104; retirement plan of Frick Art reference library, 13
 Periodicals, All-India library service issues *The Modern Librarian*, 124; convenient bindery reference for periodical workers, (L) 68; for children, book reviews in, 51; offered free by Public library, Chisholm, Minn., 398; Use of magazines in sophomore English, Verda I. James, 230
 Phelan, John F., anniversary of, 138
 Philadelphia, meetings of school librarians in, 284
 Philosophy, We need a philosophy, A. K. Borden, 175
 Phonograph records of various men, library of, 115

Pierce, Cornelia Marvin, appointment, 192
 Pinch, T. M., Convenient bindery reference for periodical workers, (L) 68
 Pliecke, Frida, appointment, 428
 Poetry: Poetry and Prose of Cale Young Rice, 44; Reference Room, Public Library, E. R. Fuller, 372; The Terrible Trio, Patricia Flinn, 137
 Pope, Mildred, appointed state librarian of Washington, 428
 Poster contest, 23; contest, winners, 426; exhibit, 231; foreign, for display, 157
 Powers, Olive E., Books recommended for retarded children, 322
 Pratt bill for books for blind, 159
 — Institute library school, news, 48, 97, 140, 183, 224, 274, 321, 378, 421
 President's Organization on Unemployment Relief asks A. L. A. to help, 422
 Presidents of United States as book collectors, 209, 215
 Prisons, The library in prison, Austin H. MacCormick, 410
 Prizes and awards of New York State library association, 296; prize novel contest, 398
 Prout, Vera J., Boy Scout reading, 54
Public Affairs Information Service Bulletin issued by S. L. A. 98
 PUBLIC LIBRARIES, *see LIBRARIES*
 Publicity, double-fire publicity (*Roto-Radio*), Marie P. Hill, 245

Questionnaire on questionnaires, 169
 Quotations, famous, new collection by Burton E. Stevenson, 116

Rademaekers and Son Company offer free instruction in repairing books, 247, 336
 Radio and reading, 21; Double-fire publicity (*Roto-Radio*), Marie P. Hill, 245; in Book Week, 398; Standard School Broadcast Music Appreciation course, 217; weekly educational programs on, 417
 Railroad coach, library in, in Marin County, Calif., P. M. Walsh, 304; station has library room, 191
 Rathbone, Josephine Adams (portrait), 341; Concerning the president of the A. L. A., A. F. P. Greer, 341; Message from the president, 341; next president of A. L. A., (ed.) 161; Tribute to Miss Ahern, 445
 Readers' advisers' round table at New Haven, 365
 Reading, Art of reading and selection of reading material, R. B. Stoever, 144; for young people, adventures in, H. E. Haines, 185; 14,000 reading as one, Sarah A. Wallace, 308; in hard times, 19; On too much reading, H. S. Canby, 405; versus learning, Van Hoesen, 82; What are reading habits?, O. H. Cheney, 329; *see also Books*
Reading with a Purpose series, *see American Library Association, publications*
 Reference book, new and significant, 38; work, Cataloging from reference viewpoint, Grace, 241, 292; work round-table, 38

Research, Place of library science in research; a suggestion, J. H. Shera, 387; work; We need a philosophy, A. K. Borden, 175

Retirement plan: *see Pensions*
 Rhode Island library association, meeting, 316
 Richardson, E. C., Curse of bibliographical cataloging, 348
 — Margaret L., Problem of duplicates, 211
 Riverside (Cal.) public library, library school, 97
 Robinson, Elizabeth, Facsimile of Gutenberg Bible presented to Meridian Public library, 258
 Rock, Katherine Howard, Cataloging plus, 306
 Roden, C. B., Dr. Clement W. Andrews, 16; Valedictory, 431
 Rosenbach, A. S. W., Presidents of U. S. as book collectors, 209, 215
 Rosenwald Fund in the south, 20
Roto-Radio (Double-fire publicity), Marie P. Hill, 245
 Rounds, Joseph, receives fellowship, 149
 Rummaging in libraries, (ed.) 118
 Rural adult education and county library, A. S. Tyler, 62; and town libraries, relations, 36; rural community objects to book wagons, 19; library service in Vermont, 69; membership scheme, L. M. Barrette, 201
 Rush, Charles, appointment, 75
 Russia, library reorganization in, 158; publication under the Soviets, S. N. Harper, 88
 Rutgers University library gets rare atlas, 303
 Ryan, M. Lillian, resigns, 327

Safford, William Robinson, Haish Memorial library, De Kalb, Ill., 165
 St. Louis public library, library school, 421
 Salaries discussed at Publicity round table at New Haven, 364; income tax on, reversal of decision on, 340; report of California library association Salaries committee, 216
 Santa Fe Museum library dedicated, 122
Saturday Review, review of children's books in, 50
 Sawyer, Jeanie, library to be named for, 302
 Saxe, Mary S., retirement of, 256
Scholastic awards, 281
 School librarian as integralist, Sir John Adams, 193; librarian's place in present educational system, Ruth Kesler, 279; librarians round-table, 56; young people's librarian and vocational guidance, Mary J. Cain, 423
 — libraries, Adventures in reading for young people, H. E. Haines, 185; Art of reading and selection of reading material R. B. Stoever, 144; awakening interest in current magazines, 230; Book budget, Bertha Carter, 143; Book report, E. P. Hess, 99; books for home reading for high

schools, 101; Boy Scout reading, V. J. Prout, 54; clash or coöperation between school authorities and libraries, (ed.) 163; Experiment in hiring student part-time assistants, Cecil J. McHale, 379; Helpful frills for school library, A. M. Wofford, 229; "High school science library for 1930-1931," by H. A. Webb, 426; *Manual for school librarians and classroom teachers*, 103; Pirate reading club, D. Waugh, 102; Publicity thru school paper, A. Batchelder, 141; Reviews of children's books, C. M. Barnes, 49; Tastes of the teens: books Young people prefer and why, May L. Becker, 323; Technique of classroom visit, Ruth Beers, 325

— Library association of Philadelphia, 284

Schools, directory of school officials, 142; publicity thru school paper, A. Batchelder, 141; work of Kalamazoo public library, with schools, 227

Science, Books for persistent wonderers, 95

Scotland, National library of, 12

Seaman, Louise H., talks to children's librarians, 145

Secretary's guide to correct modern usage same as Style book for writers and editors, (L) 11

Severance, Henry O., *Guide to Periodicals*, new edition, 337

Shepard, Alice, celebrates anniversary, 427

Shera, J. H., Place of library science in research: a suggestion, 387

Sherman, Clarence F., Preparedness of public library for participation in adult education, 411

Simmons College, library school, 98, 183, 275, 421

Simpson, Frances, retirement of, 272

Singing, group singing among librarians, (L) 68

Singley, Louise, Work with school as conducted by Kalamazoo public library, 227

Skogh, Harriet M., Tribute to Miss Ahern, 455

Smith, Edna F., Tribute to Miss Ahern, 454

— Laura, retirement of, 301

Solberg, Thorwald, Copyright and prohibition of importation of books, 82; Present relation of U. S. to international copyright, 349

Sound motion pictures, experiment in educating children by, 346

Southeastern library association, meeting, 91

Southwestern library association, meeting, 89

Soviets, Publication under, S. N. Harper, 88

Spain, Best Book of Month association in Madrid, (L) 11

Spaulding, Forrest, Special library tax, 18

Special Libraries association, Boston chapter, meeting, 24, 177; Chicago chapter, meeting, 25; course in library methods, 98; Illinois chapter, meeting, 177; issues *Public Affairs Information Service Bulletin*, 98; meeting, 314

Starr, Helen K., appointment, 58

State library, ideals for, Mary Eileen Ahern, 403

Sterling library, dedication of, 208

Stetson, W. K., Sloping shelves for bottom shelf of stacks, 13

Stevenson, Burton E., compiling new book of quotations, 116

Stoddard, John L., journey to home of, George E. Chase, 199

Stoever, Ruth B., Art of reading and selection of reading material, 144

Stokes, Frederick A., Company offers prize for best novel, 398

Storytelling. Art of, Helen Martin, 281; creative aspects of, Ruth Sawyer Durand, 412

Strohm, Adam, Intellectual freedom and integrity, 287

Student assistant, *see* Assistant; centered college library, H. W. Byrnes, 107; eliminating the trifler by system of registration, 117; rummaging in libraries, (ed.) 118

Sul Ross State Teachers' College library, Fay Hamilton, 184

Swift, Iva L., Adult advisory work in Washington Public library, 111

Syracuse public library to have industrial department, 296

Teachers College library, Columbia University, classification and cataloging at, 184

— college libraries (Concerning terminology again), (L) 69

— summer courses for (14,000 reading as one), Sarah A. Wallace, 309

Teal, William, returns to Cicero, 58, 76

Tercentenary celebration, library exhibit at, 259

Texas, package libraries in, 23

Thompson, C. Seymour, On "going" scientific, 343, 348

— Dorothy A., appointment, 192

Thorne, Florence B., Group singing among librarians, (L) 68

Todd, Nancy H., Books for persistent wonderers, 95

Toronto public library, annual report approved, 203

Towne, Jackson E., Mr. Drury and the humanists, 59

Travelers' library cards, 37

Trust Research bureau not recommended, Ralph Munn, 248

Tubby, Ruth P., Preventive against book mutilation, 295

Twin City Catalogers' round-table, 91, 266

Tyler, Alice S., Rural adult education and county library, 62; tribute to Miss Ahern, 453

Ulster County Gazette, original copy in Library of Congress, 76

Ulveling, Ralph A., Detroit charging system, (L) 69

Unemployment, duty of libraries to unemployed, (ed.) 162, (ed.) 301; librarians

Index

asked to help President's Organization, C. H. Milam, 422

United States, Civil Service commission examination for junior librarians, 297

— library study and lecture tour in, Richard Oehler, 196

University and Reference Librarians, meeting, 86; joint meeting with College Librarians of Middle West, 86

— libraries, *see* College libraries

Utley, George B., Dr. Clement W. Andrews, 17; Ever ready spirit of helpfulness, 434

Van Cleve, J. G., Children's work in scheme of library service, 27

Van Dyke, Henry, on award of Nobel prize to Sinclair Lewis, 13

Van Hoesen, H. B., Reading vs. learning, 82

van Patten, Nathan, Problems involved in organization and administration of Hoover War library, 151

Vatican library cataloging rules, new, 373

Vermont, rural library service in, 69

Vestal copyright bill, 116; failure, 257

Veterans' Bureau Medical Bulletin desires articles on hospital library work, 201

Virginia library association, meeting, 31

Visual education tests, demonstration at George Washington University, 346

Vocational guidance; Young people's librarian and vocational guidance, Mary J. Cain, 423

Vogleson, Helen E., Territory served by Los Angeles County free library, 13

Vollbehr, Otto H. F., at Meridian, Miss., 258, 261

Walker, Grace, Cataloging from a reference viewpoint, 241, 292

Wallace, Sarah Agnes, 14,000 reading as one, 308

Walsh, Patricia M., California's Parnassus on wheels, 304

Walter, Frank K., PUBLIC LIBRARIES and field of higher education, 439; Survey of land-grant colleges and universities, 225

War book; Pen against the sword, J. G. Heller, 40; library, Hoover, organization and administration of, Nathan van Patten, 151

Washington, George, bicentennial celebration, 121, 297

Washington public library, adult advisory work in, I. I. Swift, 111

— Mildred Pope appointed state librarian, 428

— University of, library school, 422

Waugh, Dolores, Pirate reading club, 102

Webb, Marian A., What do children read?, 284

Weiss, Mary C., resignation, 384

Wesleyan Archives and memorabilia, Willard P. Lewis, 382

West Virginia library association, Ohio library association and Ohio library trustees' association, joint meeting, 416

Western Reserve library school, 321

Wheeler, Joseph L., five year accomplishment of 345

White House conference on child health and protection, Guerrier, 52; aid of libraries asked in publicity work, 399

Whiting, Frederic A., Coordinating of community programs for art appreciation, 353

Wichita (Kansas) public library, report, 236

Wilson, Constance, returns to Dartmouth, *✓*

— Elizabeth, appointment, 328

— Louis R., The emergence of the college library, 354

Windsor, P. L., Tribute to Miss Ahern, 446

Winslow, Amy, Staff committee as an agent in administration, 42

Wire, G. E., A success from the start, 443

Wirt, Edith, English speaking readers in foreign literature division, Cleveland public library, 305

Wisconsin Library Bulletin, reviews of children's books in, 51

— University of, library school, 275

Witmer, E. M., appointment, 147

Wofford, Azile M., Helpful frills for a school library, 229

Wood, Harriet A., Early a champion of school library organization, 442

World calendar, by Elizabeth Achelis, revised edition, 159

Wright, Purd B., Same books, (L) 11

Wyer, J. I., Tribute to Miss Ahern, 449

Wyoming and Colorado library associations, joint meeting, 414

Yale University, dedication of Sterling library, 208; report of library, 147

Yonkers Public library bookmobile, work of, 124

Yosemite National Park, organizing library, 428

Yust, William F., resignation, 302

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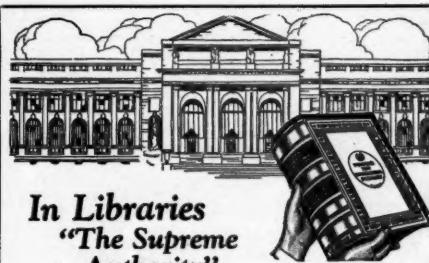
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